

ACTIVIST

NALC

A NEWSLETTER FOR BRANCH LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

Vol. 29, NO. 2

2016 Issue Two

What you need to know . . .

Your 1st convention?

Have you ever been to the NALC national convention? Do you know what to expect, what to do, or what you should do?

The 70th NALC Biennial Convention is just around the corner. Los Angeles, CA - the City of Angels. Your flight has been booked, your room reservation is made and you are set. Sun, fun and seven days away from your route and the Post Office! And while there will be opportunity to enjoy yourself by experiencing some of the local happenings, it is important to remain mindful of the importance of the convention and your participation as a delegate.

This article is primarily focused toward activists who never have attended a national convention. However, even those of you who have attended dozens may learn something.

What to expect

If you are anything like most of us, you will be amazed by your

first convention. This will almost certainly be the biggest gathering of letter carriers you have ever seen in one place. For the most part everything will be upbeat, new and even a little exciting.

Going to the convention facility and registering will be the first item on the agenda for most delegates, and the beginning of your convention experience. The Los Angeles Convention Center is a pretty large place, but there should be plenty of good signage to help you find your way. Big rooms will be the norm for the week, and registration is no exception. For more information about the conventions visit the National conventions & rap sessions page of the NALC website at: www.nalc.org/union-administration/nalc-convention.

NALC headquarters has invested in a new computerized registration process which should speed things up, but it also requires that you register individually. Prior to the Los Angeles

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convention it was possible for a single designated delegate to register a whole branch's delegation at one time. That option is no longer available, so be prepared and have your documents with you.

Letter carrier delegates work the registration desk, so you will have a friendly face to greet you when you register and get your delegate credentials and materials. Each registered delegate will receive a credentials badge and delegate bag, which contains materials you will need during the week. Your credentials badge is important - so don't lose or misplace it. Only delegates with proper credentials are allowed into the convention hall. You should plan to bring your delegate bag and printed materials with you every day as well.

Aside from the convention sessions there will be workshops Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning before the general sessions. For the most part, these workshops will be conducted by national officers and cover a wide range of issues and topics. Plan to attend one of the workshops each morning. A schedule of workshops will be in your delegate bag. Afternoon workshops are also offered Monday through Thursday following the general sessions. These workshops, both morning and afternoon, should not be missed.

Some branches will assign specific delegates to attend specific workshops. If your branch doesn't, you may want to coordinate with other delegates from your branch to take advantage of as many classes as possible without overlap.

The national convention showcases training and what your union is doing for the membership. The

Contract Administration Unit (CAU), City Delivery, Safety and Health, OWCP, and Retirement departments will all have workshops. Those are only a few of the subjects you will be able to pick from. You can refer to the July 2016 Postal Record for a complete schedule of the workshops being offered. A lot of planning, effort and expense go into these workshops. They are designed for you and your branch. Take advantage of them.

Monday morning's general session is an eye opening experience for any first time delegate. President Rolando will give the opening address, which will set the tone for the week. There will be between 7000-8000 letter carrier delegates in the main hall. Each of the 15 Regions will have designated seating areas and many states and branches make it a point to sit together within those designated areas. Several large projection screens will carry the proceedings live, and once you see the size of the hall, you will understand why. Be prepared - it will be loud.

You will hear lots of speakers covering just about every aspect of letter carrier lives. We will have representatives from other unions, other countries, other organizations, legislators and dignitaries.

What is my role?

Every delegate to a national convention should ask themselves this very legitimate question, whether this is your first convention or twentieth. As an elected delegate you ultimately have the say-so in what this union does. There will be a number of sub-

jects raised during the week and a number of votes will be called for. You are the decider – the voter – the voice for your union. Your vote carries just as much weight as every other delegate at the convention. That is a fact, not just something written in this article to make you feel good. The NALC Constitution specifically addresses that the National Convention is the “supreme body” that makes decisions. Article 1, Section 4 states:

The National Convention shall be the supreme body to which final appeal shall be made on all matters emanating from Members, Branches and State Associations. There shall be no geographical limitations on the jurisdiction of the Union.


As a delegate you are part of the supreme body that makes decisions and you should take that seriously. The members of your branch who are sending you deserve nothing less than your serious consideration on every vote.

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Making decisions

During the convention, delegates will discuss and vote on the adoption of any proposed amendments and resolutions offered by branches, state associations or the NALC Executive Council, that have been properly submitted. Most of the amendments and resolutions can be found in the printed materials in the convention bag.

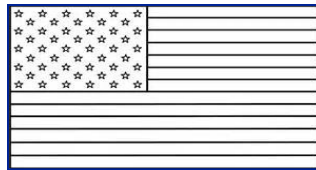
The “maker” of a proposed amendment seeks a change to the *NALC Constitution*, the document that governs our union. The intent of a proposed resolution is to establish direction and priorities of NALC with issues pertaining to legislation, contract negotiations and other matters of general interests. Prior to the discussion and vote on a proposed amendment or resolution, either the NALC Executive Council or Board of Trustees

will announce to the convention delegates its recommendation regarding approval or disapproval of adoption of the proposal. The “maker” of proposed amendments and resolutions will speak from the floor in support of their position. Other brothers and sisters will speak in opposition to the position. Listen and weigh the arguments for and against any proposal, because your vote will count. After considering the recommendation of the Executive Council and all discussion regarding a proposed amendment, you, along with the other delegates at the convention, will then decide whether to adopt the change to the *NALC Constitution*. Likewise with proposed resolutions, you, along with the other delegates, will decide if NALC pursues the course proposed by the “maker”

of a proposed resolution. NALC moves based on how convention delegates vote.

While there will be lots of time for fun before and after the convention week, it really is business during the sessions. Sure there are a laughs and light hearted moments all week long, but the convention is about making decisions. Decisions which will affect you, you workmates, your family.

The biggest decision you will make during the week is to stay engaged in the business of the convention. Listen, watch, participate and learn. This is a very critical time for our union. Your leadership as a delegate is essential if we are going to move forward. Your branch has sent you to do just that.



Gearing up for Election Day

As NALC leaders, you know there’s a lot at stake this election. The middle class is facing an onslaught of attacks on workers’ rights, and letter carriers are no exception. Time and time again, NALC’s activists have played an important role in helping elect lawmakers to Congress who care about our issues. There’s no reason

for the 2016 cycle to be any different.

As Election Day draws nearer, you can begin preparing activists to participate in our efforts to elect and re-elect lawmakers committed to maintaining a viable Postal Service and defending letter carriers. Three different ways are discussed below.

1. REGISTERING LETTER CARRIERS TO VOTE

Voting is the single most important action any letter carrier can take this election. Despite this, nearly 51,000 of NALC’s members – or 23 % – are not registered to vote. As NALC leaders who many members look to for guidance, let’s com-

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General Election, November 8

State	2016 Voter Registration Deadlines
Alabama	October 24
Alaska	Postmarked by October 9; email or fax received by October 9
Arizona	October 10
Arkansas	October 10
California	October 24
Colorado	October 31 – Election Day Registration available
Connecticut	November 1 – Election Day Registration available
Delaware	October 15
District of Columbia	October 17
Florida	October 11
Georgia	October 11
Hawaii	October 10
Idaho	October 14
Illinois	October 11
Indiana	October 11
Iowa	October 29
Kansas	October 18
Kentucky	October 11
Louisiana	October 11
Maine	October 18 – Same Day Voter Registration available
Maryland	October 18
Massachusetts	October 19
Michigan	October 11
Minnesota	October 18 – Election Day Registration available
Mississippi	October 8 (Postmark)
Missouri	October 12
Montana	October 11

General Election, November 8

State	2016 Voter Registration Deadlines
Nebraska	October 21
Nevada	October 8 – October 18 if online or in-person
New Hampshire	October 29
New Jersey	October 18
New Mexico	October 11
New York	October 14 – Postmark, must be received by October 19; in person by October 14
North Carolina	October 14
North Dakota	No voter registration required
Ohio	October 11
Oklahoma	October 14
Oregon	October 18
Pennsylvania	October 11
Puerto Rico	September 19
Rhode Island	October 9
South Carolina	October 8
South Dakota	October 24
Tennessee	October 11
Texas	October 11
Utah	October 11 – November 1 if online or in-person
Vermont	November 2
Virginia	October 17
Washington	October 10 – mail or online; October 31 in-person
West Virginia	October 18
Wisconsin	October 19 – November 4 if in-person; Election Day registration available
Wyoming	October 24

Election Day

(Continued from page 3)

mit to helping more letter carriers participate in our democracy this election cycle.

Step 1: Investigate local resources

Visit your Secretary of State’s website to become familiar with your local voter registration guidelines. Most likely, you can obtain copies of voter registration forms, absentee ballot applications, and party affiliation declaration forms from a nearby office. [The deadline for voter registration in each state and the District of Columbia is listed in the table on pages 5-6.]

Step 2: Create a plan

Set some goals to determine your success and help you stay motivated. How many volunteers do you need to help you? How many eligible voters do you want to register? When and where are you going to reach unregistered letter carriers?

The most important thing to do after your drive is to get the forms to the Secretary of State immediately for processing. Some states have laws regarding how long you have to turn in these forms, so make sure you understand the applicable rules and regulations.

Step 3: Follow Up

Keep a list of who you’ve registered to vote and encourage them to cast their ballot on or before Election Day. You can also continue to build a stronger base of activists by encouraging these individuals to contribute to the Letter Carriers

er Political Fund (LCPF) and remain informed by following the updates and news on the NALC website at: www.nalc.org.

2. PUTTING BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Each election, we’ve done what we do best: put our boots on the ground to help candidates who care about our issues get elected to office. The 2016 general election won’t be any different; we’ll be joining the AFL-CIO’s labor efforts in battleground states throughout the country. Together, our activists will be turning out with other union members to help phone bank, canvass in local communities, and recruit more activists to join the field work.

As November 8 gets closer, prepare to rally the troops and gather information on who in your branch is most eager to help elect candidates who support NALC issues. Many members of Congress know who we are and why we’re important because of the effort we invest in getting them elected. Consider recruiting letter carriers to participate on weekends and federal holidays, such as Labor Day and Columbus Day.

3. INCREASING PAC PARTICIPATION

LCPF is one of several important tools we have to influence elections and ensure we deliver our message to Washington. Despite this and the many activists who regularly participate in field work, just eight percent of NALC members donate to our political action committee (PAC). Quite frankly, as the cost of House and

Senate races continues to skyrocket, we simply have to do better.

We’re more than an eight percent union. This election, let’s pledge to recruit more LCPF donors by educating letter carriers that these contributions help fight for our union, our jobs and our livelihoods, by growing our PAC and electing the champions we need to fight for us. We’re no longer fighting off the constant attacks that threatened us before. Let’s show Congress that we’re ready to help work with and elect lawmakers committed to defending letter carriers and the Postal Service.

WE’RE HERE TO HELP!

As you know, our activists are the most important part of protecting our union and our livelihood. There’s no other way to say this: they are the backbone of our grass-roots efforts. As you prepare to engage activists in important electoral work this cycle, NALC’s Legislative and Political Department is eager and ready to help provide you with resources and answer any questions you may have.

Together, we can ensure that letter carriers are sending our message to Washington with their vote and taking the first step toward further activism. For more information on starting your voter registration drive, please contact NALC’s legislative and political department at (202) 393-4695.



DELIVERING FOR AMERICA

NALC veterans —

Honoring those who served

The National Association of Letter Carriers is a diverse group of approximately 275,000 active and retired members, of which almost a quarter are veterans of the US Armed Forces. Due to their military service, this large group of our membership is afforded many unique rights and benefits, which are often difficult to understand, and at times even unknown to the veterans themselves. Last year, President Rolando’s vision of thanking NALC military

veterans by providing a meaningful forum became a reality with the creation of the NALC Veterans Group.

New Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members who are military veterans with access to information and tools specific to veterans’ rights and benefits within the US Postal Service. It seeks to provide all NALC mem-

bers who are also military veterans—active full-time and part-time letter carriers, as well as retired letter carriers—resources, rights, information, and a sense of camaraderie.

When the NALC Veterans Group was formed, President Rolando mailed a letter to all members who were identified in the NALC database as veterans notify-

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You continue to serve your country—

THANK YOU!

NALC Veterans Group

Complete this form, attach a stamp and return it by mail

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

NALC BRANCH NUMBER: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____

I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):

AMERICAN LEGION DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OTHER: _____

To join the NALC Veterans Group, go to the NALC website and fill out this form.

NALC veterans

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ing them of the group with an invitation to join. In addition, the creation of the group was announced in the October 2015 issue of *The Postal Record*, which also included a sign-up card. Since its formation, over 8,000 NALC members have joined the group and have received an NALC Veterans Group pin as an expression of gratitude for their military service to our country.

As an NALC activist, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the offerings the group affords to its members, and be able to direct those NALC military veterans you represent to the group. If you yourself are a veteran who hasn't joined the group, or if you have members who are veterans but haven't joined, you are encouraged to check out the web page for more information.

NALC website

NALC created a page on its website designed specifically for members who are military veterans. The page can be viewed under the *Member Benefits* section at <https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/military-veterans>. It provides links to forms which NALC members who are military veterans can use to join the NALC Veterans Group.

The *Military Veterans* page under the *Member Benefits* tab of the website also provides links to the Veterans Group article printed monthly in *The Postal Record* as well as links to government websites which provide resources regarding veteran-related issues and benefits. NALC national officers, department heads and staff mem-

bers constantly research topics that benefit and affect military veterans. In addition to the many resources already available on the page, whenever a new subject or resource becomes available, NALC updates the page to include the additional information.

Regardless of your military veteran status, as an activist representing NALC members, understanding the rights and benefits specifically afforded to veterans will enhance your ability to better represent a group that, as already noted, makes up almost 25% of our membership. Topics of interest and resources available to veterans include information on the following: retirement issues, military disability benefits and workers' compensation, contractual rights, legislative issues, community services opportunities, veterans' preference documents, military leave documents and facts regarding Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

NALC activists can use the resources available through the website and the Veterans Group to educate and train members who are also military veterans on the rights and benefits afforded them. Activists can use these resources as information to highlight at union meetings, for topics to discuss at veterans' training classes, and for sources of information during their normal day-to-day representational activities assisting the membership.

NALC will continue to provide our members, who are military veterans, with information that is useful to them, and will continue to reach out to all of our veterans

with an invitation to join the NALC Veterans Group. Any active or retired NALC member who is a veteran of the US Armed Services may join this group by simply completing the sign-up card (available from the NALC website) and mailing it to:

NALC Veterans Group
National Association of Letter Carriers
100 Indiana Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Los Angeles convention

In August, at the 70th Biennial National Convention in Los Angeles, NALC will be hosting a Veterans Group booth to share information about the group, and to provide those who are eligible the opportunity to join if they have not yet done so. All who have not joined are encouraged to visit the booth, sign up, and receive their NALC Veterans Group pin.

In President Rolando's letter last year to the NALC military veterans, he stated "*Oftentimes, gratitude is expressed in words such as 'Thank you,' but never followed up with any tangible expressions. My goal is to follow-up words with actions by providing a meaningful forum for NALC military veterans.*" The NALC Veterans group provides that forum for our military veterans. As an activist, you should inform the members you represent about the group so they will have the opportunity to join and take advantage of all that it has to offer. ■

STEWARDS' CORNER

Contentions: Tying it all together

So you have determined there was a violation of the *National Agreement*. You researched the contractual language, interviewed witnesses, requested the necessary information to prove the violation and gathered the facts to use as evidence for your grievance file. You are done, right? Not quite yet. One of the most important aspects of any successful grievance is the steward's explanation of how all that documentary evidence points to a violation of the *National Agreement*. Those connecting threads are known as contentions, and they are a fundamental part of any grievance. Without contentions, all a steward has is a pile of facts, with no explanation of how management's actions violated our agreement.

It is important to understand there is a significant difference between the facts you have accumulated and a contention. A fact is something real – something that actually happened or actually exists. For example, a fact you may have gathered for a grievance involving discipline for tardiness may read like this: *"Prior to June 1, 2015, Letter Carrier Jones had not been late for ten years."* This is a statement of fact; it can be shown with documentary evidence.

The contention regarding this fact is different. A contention is an argument or a position. An example of a contention in the grievance relating to tardiness might be: *"Removing Letter Carrier Jones for being two minutes late on June 1, 2015 was punitive and in violation of the just cause principles found in Article 16 of the National Agreement where it reads: "In the administration of this Article, a basic principle shall be that discipline should be corrective in nature, rather than punitive."* Here,

plete set of facts has been obtained, the contentions should reference those facts to present the union's reasons why the grievance should be sustained. Every contention should be clear, logical and based on the facts. Veering from these fundamental principles may lead you down the path of making a contention not supported by the facts. A good example of this might be: *"Everyone knows the supervisor was out to get Letter Carrier*

**There is a significant
difference between the facts
you have accumulated and a
contention**

the union's contention is the removal for one instance of tardiness is punitive and violates our *National Agreement*. The union has tied the argument to the language in Article 16. By providing the documentation which proves Letter Carrier Jones had not been late for work in the past ten years, the contention is now logically supported by the facts.

To be successful with any grievance, once a clear and com-

Jones." Although the steward may believe this to be true, a contention based on personal opinion is not based on any facts. It is never enough to just say the words. If we are going to say it, we have to back it up with evidence.

Sometimes developing our contentions helps us double check that we have obtained all the facts we need for a particular grievance. Consider this scenar-

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io: you contend, or make the argument, management violated Article 8 when it improperly assigned overtime to a letter carrier not on the overtime desired list. You have the Employee Everything Reports or clock rings documenting who worked the overtime, but didn't consider including the overtime desired list. Reviewing the contentions may remind you about this piece of evidence. In this scenario, to help prove the contention management violated Article 8, the overtime desired list is evidence documenting who was and who was not entitled to the overtime.

Shop stewards should also try to remember that sometimes our grievances are heard and resolved by individuals who don't have any knowledge of the people or situations involved in the grievance. This makes it important to

be sure there is a clear link between the facts presented in the grievance file and the contentions argued. Stewards should pay close attention to the advice offered in the *NALC Shop Steward's Guide*:

In order for a grievance to have the best chance of success, stewards should be able to answer "yes" to this question:

Do our contentions clearly explain the documented facts and how the National Agreement was violated?

Any individual tasked with adjudicating a grievance from your office should be able to read through the grievance, know exactly what happened, and how those circumstances equate to a violation of the *National Agreement*. There are a couple of things the steward can do to help those who may be reading the grievance. First, since there is limited space in Block 17

of PS Form 8190, *Joint Step A Grievance Form*, where the contentions are explained, it may be necessary to include additional pages ensuring all of the information is neat, organized, legible, and easy to understand. Next, write down all the facts of the case, restate the contract provisions involved, and explain how the facts of the case constitute the violation of the *National Agreement* for each contention. Doing this will tell the story to the reader.

Successfully communicating the union's contentions in writing is not an easy endeavor. It takes concentration, perseverance and plenty of practice. If you remember to keep it clear and simple, organize your writing, cite directly from the *National Agreement* or other contractual provisions, and resist the urge to include arguments not based on facts, it will get easier!

Employee claims

Article 27 of the *National Agreement* is often forgotten. Maybe folks just get it confused with employer claims and they don't want to think about it. The truth is very few employee claims are filed. No doubt a lot fewer than could be. In fact, most people don't know where to begin when filing a claim. The membership needs to know about this pro-

vision in the contract to take advantage of it.

An employee can file a claim within 14 days of the event to be reimbursed for the loss or damage to personal property. Employee claims are subject to a \$10 minimum. The loss or damage must have been suffered "...in connection with or incident to the employee's employment while on

duty or while on Postal premises," and the possession of the personal property at work must have been reasonable or proper under the circumstances. These two requirements are often interrelated. In determining whether these requirements were met, arbitrators generally evaluate:

(1) whether it was necessary for the employee to have the lost

or damaged item in his or her possession at work, and

(2) whether the item's value was so great that the employee should not have risked losing or damaging it at work.

Know also that the Postal Service need not pay a claim when a loss was caused in whole or part by the negligent act of the employee. In other words, don't expect to be reimbursed for a \$5,000 diamond ring that you left sitting on your case when you went to the street. The loss or damage also will not be compensated when it resulted from normal wear and tear associated with day-to-day living and working conditions. Damage to your uniform that is normal wear and tear will not be compensated, but if you get attacked by a dog who tears your uniform pants, that would be covered.

Article 27 requires an employee to file a timely claim within 14 days after the loss or damage occurred. A claim normally is filed on PS Form 2146, *Employee's Claim for Personal Property*. Any written document may be treated as a proper claim, however, if it provides substantiating information. Claims should be supported with evidence such as a sales receipt, a statement from the seller showing the price and date of purchase, or a statement from the seller concerning replacement value. If the item is repairable, include an estimate for the repair.

Some examples of items that may be covered are: eye glasses, cell phones, a lunch box, uniform items, keys, bicycles, jewelry, or maybe the cost of replacing a driver's license. There are a lot of things that could happen while on the job that could lead to the loss or damage of a personal item. Did you

walk by a piece of equipment and your uniform got caught on something sharp and was torn? File for the uniform item. Did your postal vehicle get broken into and your purse or backpack was stolen? There are a lot of things that may be covered under this scenario. Maybe a cell phone, car keys, house keys, the cost of replacing your driver's license, your prescription sunglasses, cash, even the cost of the purse or backpack.

One thing you need to remember is that the amount of the loss claimed must reflect the depreciated value of the property. So if your uniform shirt that you have had for a year is damaged, don't expect to get back the full replacement cost.

Let's use the example of a purse or backpack either stolen from a vehicle or maybe destroyed in a vehicle fire. What might your claim be filed for and what arguments and documentation would you include?

Backpack or Purse/Wallet – Your claim should explain the circumstances of the loss including the date and maybe an accident or police report. The documentation could include a description of the item, a receipt from the purchase if you still have it, a statement regarding the cost of the item if a receipt is not available, the age of the item, and maybe a store ad showing the replacement cost of the item.

Cell Phone – Your statement should include the type of cell phone, the price paid with a receipt if available, the age of the phone and a statement and documentation regarding the replacement cost. In the case of a cell phone you may also want to explain why you need

to have it with you at work. The cell phone policy for your office, or a statement that you use the phone to call in or that your supervisor calls you on your cell phone may help.

Prescription Sunglasses – Again, the price paid along with a receipt if available must be provided. Explain the need for prescription sunglasses and how long you have had them. Even these will be depreciated. You should also supply the estimated replacement cost from your eye doctor.

Driver's License – It's clear that you need your license to drive a postal vehicle but some folks may forget to claim their license and the expense of replacing it. You should provide documentation as to the cost of replacement.

Cash – While you certainly can claim that you needed some cash on you for lunch or other items, if you are carrying a large amount of cash you will need to explain why. If you withdrew a large sum of cash from the bank in preparation for your upcoming vacation, explain that, but know that it may be found that the value was so great that you should not have risked losing it at work.

Car/House Keys – Folks may not think of some added complications when it comes to keys. Your keys clearly will need to be replaced. But is there also a key fob for your car keys? When you are talking about house keys, it may not just be replacing the keys. If the thief got your license or other documents with your address, you will include in your claim the cost of replacing the

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Employee claims

(Continued from page 11)

locks on your home. In this case, supply the cost of the new locks and maybe the cost of someone performing the service.

While these kind of thefts are hopefully rare, they are just an example of when to use an employee claim. It is more likely that the claim will be for a damaged uniform item, damaged eyeglasses, or other items lost or damaged while at work.

As far as filing the claim itself, it is submitted with recommendations by the union steward to the employer at the local level. The employer will submit the claim, with the employer's and the steward's recommendations, within 15 days, to the Step B Team for determination. The Step B Team will review the claim, and issue a decision within 14 days of the receipt of the claim at Step B. The Step B Team may resolve the claim, remand the case for specific information needed for a deci-

sion at Step B, or declare an impasse. An impasse on the claim may be appealed to arbitration pursuant to Article 15, Step B (d) of the *National Agreement*.

Finally, privately owned motor vehicles and their contents are excluded from Article 27 claims. However, if a letter carrier's automobile is damaged by "the negligent or wrongful act" of the Postal Service, the carrier may seek recovery under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

Relative standing for CCAS

As an NALC activist you should be certain the relative standing for the city carrier assistants (CCAs) in your installation is correct. Relative standing is a form of seniority that was created for CCAs in the 2011 National Agreement. It is important for a variety of reasons.

Relative standing is used to determine the order in which CCAs are converted to full-time career status. It also is used to determine which CCA will be separated upon the completion of a 360-day term, if management makes the decision to separate a CCA for lack of work or for operational reasons. The CCA with the lowest relative standing is always separated, if circumstances arise

pursuant to Paragraphs (h) and (i) in the "CCA General Principles" found in Appendix B of the 2011 *National Agreement*.

Relative standing is also used to determine which CCA is awarded a hold-down, and plays a role in annual leave in many places. For all of these reasons, it is important that relative standing is correctly calculated in accordance with the *National Agreement*.

Relative standing is determined by the original CCA hire date in an installation. For CCAs who were city letter carrier transitional employees (TEs) at any time after Sept. 29, 2007, the time served as a TE is added, less any breaks in service. Para-

graph (f) of the "CCA General Principles" addresses this:

f. When hired, a CCA's relative standing in an installation is determined by his/her original CCA appointment date to the installation, using Article 41.2.B.6.(a) where applicable, and adding the time served as a city letter carrier transitional employee for appointments made after September 29, 2007 in any installation

This language is further explained by Question 60 of the March 15 jointly developed *Questions and Answers, 2011 USPS/NALC National Agreement* (M-01870):

60. How is time credited for transitional employee em-

Relative standing

(Continued from page 12)

ployment when determining relative standing for CCAs?

All time spent on the rolls as a city letter carrier transitional employee after September 29, 2007 will be added to CCA time in an installation to determine relative standing. Breaks in transitional employee service are not included in the relative standing period.

Time spent as a TE

When crediting time spent as a TE, it does not matter where an individual served as a TE; all time served as a TE since Sept. 29, 2007, is credited. Question 63 of M-01870 reads:

63. For time spent as a city letter carrier transitional employee, does it matter where an individual was employed when determining relative standing?

No. All time on the rolls as a transitional employee after September 29, 2007 counts toward relative standing regardless of the installation(s) in which the transitional employee was employed.

The relative standing credit for service as a city letter carrier TE always remains with that employee even if hired in another installation. Question 64 of M-01870 reads:

64. Does time credited toward relative standing for time worked as a transitional employee after September 29, 2007 transfer from one installation to another once hired as a CCA?

Yes.

Unlike relative standing credit earned as a TE, relative standing

credit earned as a CCA does not transfer with a CCA to another installation. This is addressed in Question 65 of M-01870:

65. Does relative standing earned as a CCA in one installation move with a CCA who is separated and is later employed in another installation?

No.

If this CCA is then re-employed in his or her original installation, the CCA will begin earning relative standing as if this were an original appointment. All time credit earned as a TE after Sept. 29, 2007, is added to this new date. Question 66 in M-01870 addresses this situation:

66. How is relative standing determined for a CCA who is employed in an installation, then permanently moves to a differ-

ent installation and then is subsequently reemployed in the original installation?

Relative standing in this situation is based on the date the employee is reemployed in the original installation and is augmented by time served as a city letter carrier transitional employee for appointments made after September 29, 2007 (in any installation).

If a tie still exists between two or more CCAs, Appendix B, I.1. "General Principles," Section (f) of the *National Agreement* requires

the provisions of Article 41.2.B.6 (a) be applied:

41.2.B.6. Relative Seniority Standing

(a) In cases of appointment on the same day, where there is a tie in seniority, the relative standing on the appointment register will determine the more senior carrier.

Question 61 of M-01870 explains how placement on the relative standing roster is determined when two or more CCAs have the same total time credit for relative standing:

61. How is placement on the relative standing roster determined when two or more CCAs have the same total time credited for relative standing?

Relative standing is determined by the original CCA hire date in an installation

First, the relative standing on the hiring list (appointment register) will be used to determine the CCA with higher relative standing (See Article 41.2.B.6. [a]). If a tie remains then the formula outlined in Article 41.2.B.7 is applied.

New Question 62 in M-01870 explains how Article 41.2.B.6 (a) is applied. It also clarifies how relative standing is calculated if more than one hiring register is used, and how veterans' prefer-

(Continued on page 14)

Relative standing

(Continued from page 13)

ence points are applied when determining relative standing.

62. How are the provisions of Article 41.2.B.6. [a] referenced in Appendix B, I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES, Section f. of the National Agreement applied when determining a CCA's relative standing?

If more than one CCA is appointed on the same day, the relative standing will be determined by the order on the hiring list. If CCAs are hired from more than one hiring list on the same day, relative standing will be determined by applying the rules in Handbook EL-312, Section 441, Basic Order:

1) Applicants who claim 10-point preference based on a compensable military service-connected disability of 10 percent or more are arranged at the top of the relative standing list in descending order of final numerical rating in this group.

2) Applicants claiming other 10-point preference (XP) and applicants claiming 5-point preference (TP) are placed ahead of nonpreference eligible applicants with the same final rating.

3) XP eligibles are placed ahead of TP eligibles with the same final rating.

To resolve any ties, numerical by the last three or more numbers (using enough numbers to break the tie, but not fewer than three numbers) of the employee's social security number, from the lowest to highest.

'Final numerical rating' and 'final rating' as referenced

above are determined by adding the individual's score on the entrance exam and any applicable veterans' preference points.

Errors in relative standing are usually easy to identify. As an activist, you should be certain that the relative standing is calculated correctly for all the CCAs in your installation.

Common mistakes

The most common error occurs when more than one CCA is hired on the same day in an installation, and the provisions of the *National Agreement* and the jointly developed questions and answers are not properly applied.

Another common miscalculation is not crediting a former TE with time served as a TE after Sept 29, 2007. Former TEs who left the Postal Service a number of years ago sometimes return as CCAs or move from one installation to another. TE time should be properly credited toward relative standing.

Another error sometimes occurs when a CCA is permanently reassigned from one installation to another. These reassignments are permissible if the CCA voluntarily terminates his or her appointment in one installation and is permanently reassigned to another, in accordance with Question 27 of the Questions and Answers (M-01870):

27. May CCAs be permanently reassigned from one post office (installation) to another during their appointment?

Yes, provided the employee's current appointment is being voluntarily terminated. To avoid a break in service a per-

manent reassignment to a different installation must be effected on the first day of a pay period.

The CCA in this case begins a new period of relative standing. The time served as a CCA in his or her original installation is not credited to the relative standing in the new installation, even though there may not have been a break in service. Any time served as a TE after Sept 29, 2007, is credited toward the employee's relative standing.

Lastly, some errors occur when a CCA returns to the same installation after the five-day break in service. In this case, the CCA's relative standing should not change.

If you suspect there is an error on the relative standing list for your installation, speak with your branch leadership and perform a full investigation. If you confirm the error, a grievance should be filed citing violations of Article 41.2.B.6. (a) and the *Questions and Answers* (M-01870).

Contact the NBA

Your branch president should also contact your National Business Agent's office and explain the error that was discovered. The president should be prepared to give the affected employee's names and as much detail as possible about the error. Oftentimes the NBA's office can be helpful in correcting these issues.



Training Seminars & State Conventions

Listed below are all training sessions, educational seminars, or state conventions currently scheduled. All dates are 2016. If your region is not listed, no training is scheduled at this time. For more information on any event, please contact the appropriate business agent.

Region 2 - NBA Paul Price 360.892.6545
Alaska, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Oregon,
Washington
October 31—November 4 Rap Session; Coeur
d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, ID

Region 3 - NBA Michael Caref 217.787.6545
Illinois
October 2 Rap Session; Region 3 Training Center,
Lisle, IL
October 3-4 Fall Training; NIU Conference Center,
Naperville IL

Region 4 - NBA Roger Bledsoe 501.760.6566
Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Wyoming
September 22-24 Region 4 Rap Session & Training;
Double Tree Hotel, Grand Junction CO

Region 5 - NBA Mike Birkett, 314.872.0227
Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas
October 17-19 Nebraska Fall Training; Hotel TBA,
City TBA NE
October 25-27 Iowa Fall Training; Holiday Inn,
Coralville IA

Region 6 - NBA Patrick Carroll 586.997.9917
Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan
October 8-10 KIM Training Seminar; North Kentucky
Convention Center, Covington KY

Region 7 - NBA Chris Wittenburg 612.378.3035
Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
September 16-17 South Dakota Fall Training
Seminar; Hotel TBA, Deadwood SD
October 2-4 Minnesota State Convention;
Cragun's Resort, Brainerd MN

Region 9 - NBA Kenneth Gibbs 954.964.2116
Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina
October 13-15 Florida Training Seminar; Double-
tree, Tampa FL
October 28-29 North Carolina Training Seminar;
Hotel TBA, Raleigh NC
November 5-6 South Carolina Training; Branch 233
Union Hall, Columbia SC

Region 12 - NBA Bill Lucini 215.824.4826
Pennsylvania, South and Central New Jersey
September 25-27 New Jersey State Biennial Training
Seminar; Caesar's Hotel & Casino, Atlantic City,
NJ
October 27-29 Pennsylvania State Convention;
Penn State Conference Center Hotel, State
College PA

Region 13 - NBA Tim Dowdy 757.934.1013
Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia,
Washington DC
September 18 OWCP Regional Training; Hotel TBA,
Washington DC

Region 15 - NBA Larry Cirelli 212.868.0284
Northern New Jersey, New York, SW Connecticut,
Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
September 25-27 New Jersey State Biennial Training
Seminar; Caesar's Hotel & Casino, Atlantic City,
NJ

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USPS *BY THE NUMBERS*

Operations

FY 2016 Q2 YTD	Number	Change from SPLY*
Total mail volume (Millions of pieces)	80,188	-0.4%
Mail volume by class (millions)		
<i>First-Class</i>	32,330	-0.8%
<i>Periodicals</i>	2,820	-4.5%
<i>Standard (bulk mail)</i>	41,556	-0.8%
<i>Shipping & Packages</i>	2,675	14.0%
<i>International</i>	547	8.3%
<i>Other</i>	260	11.1%
Average days to delivery FY15 Q4		
First-class mail	2.6	
Package services	4.7	

*SPLY=Same Period Last Year

Finances

FY 2016 Q2 YTD (millions)	Number	Change from SPLY*
<i>Operating Revenue</i>	\$37,126	3.9%
<i>Operating Expenses</i>	\$38,762	2.3%
<i>Controllable Operating Income</i>	\$1,833	
<i>PSRHF Expenses</i>	\$2,900	
<i>Workers' Comp adjustments</i>	\$546	
<i>Net operating loss</i>	\$1,733	

Employment

2016 - PP12	Number	Change from SPLY*
City carrier career employment	169,689	3.9%
<i>Full Time</i>	168,557	4.2%
<i>PT Regular</i>	510	-7.6%
<i>PTF</i>	622	-49.2%
City Carrier Assistant 1	33,569	8.6%
City Carrier Assistant 2	7,451	2.0%
City carriers per delivery supervisor	13.2	
Career USPS employment	501,331	2.4%
Non-career USPS employment	135,754	4.3%