



NALC Convention Chronicle

Thursday, July 24 covering the THIRD SESSION: Wednesday, July 23

Protecting carriers' jobs dominates convention day with sad overtones

The battle to protect letter carriers' jobs was the dominant theme of the third session of the 66th Biennial Convention of the NALC on Wednesday, although the day also was marked indelibly by sad news and a story of disaster and survival.

Delegates also heard an address by APWU President William Burrus—the first time a clerks' leader had addressed the NALC Convention—and from two international labor leaders. A number of resolutions came before the body and 15 members were nominated for the seven AFL-CIO delegate positions to be voted on Thursday.

The capstone of the day was a 30-minute video that chronicled the union's campaign to quash Contract Delivery Service. It featured footage from Florida and Oregon, two of the places where the confrontation between NALC and the Postal Service played out publicly, thanks to the zeal of letter carriers in educating patrons and politicians about the dangers of subcontracting.

Introducing the video, "Fighting for a Better Way," President William H. Young declared the NALC has "drawn a line in the sand (to) stop the outsourcing of the final delivery of mail." When it ended, he stressed the battle is still going on, with the continuing discovery of CDS contracts that have not been canceled, despite agreements reached under provisions of the 2006-2011 contract.

The NALC continues to meet with the USPS on the issue, and Young said he has a plan for what will happen if a satisfactory resolution is not reached. Drawing enthusiastic cheers, he vowed that after the November elections, "we will have a new president in the White House and bigger, new majorities in Congress and we will pass a law to ban delivery outsourcing in our craft forever."

Session opens

Music provided by the Milwaukee Band greeted delegates as they filed into the hall and President Young called the convention to order at 10:01 a.m. Baton Rouge, Louisiana Branch 129 member Walker Williams began the proceedings by singing a soulful rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Next, Young called Massachusetts State Association President Patrick Byrne to the microphone to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Rabbi John Franken of Boston's Temple Ohabei Shalom offered the invocation.

The president told delegates that Wednesday was an informal "Health Benefit Plan Day," and he urged all NALC members to



The day's session took on a somber tone when news of Santa Clara, CA Br. 1427 President James Stankovich's death was announced. President Young called for a moment of silence (upper left) to honor Stankovich and all those who have died since the last convention. Darcie Gardea (above) placed Stankovich's vest and credentials in his chair. Her pain was shared by many, including California State Association President John Beaumont (left).

“come home” and join the letter carriers’ plan. Increased participation would make the plan stronger and better, and help reduce health care costs, Young said. That could bolster the union’s bargaining position in 2011 and strengthen the case for a letter carrier-only plan.

Resolutions

Brian Hellman



As the first order of business for the day, President Young invited Director of Safety and Health Brian Hellman to the microphone to continue consideration of proposed resolutions—a process that was interrupted several times throughout the session to give invited speakers a chance to address

the delegates.

The Convention upheld most of the Executive Council’s recommendations, but it overturned the disapproval of a measure to ask the Postal Service to include a “skort” (a hybrid skirt/shorts) as an optional woman’s uniform component.

There was also considerable deliberation over the Council’s disapproval of a resolution to seek wider access to the Postal Service’s “folio” system. A division on the measure was deemed too close to call; when a teller vote was held, the Council’s disapproval was upheld by 3,266-to-1,544.

A heart-felt loss

After dispatching the initial resolution, President Young returned to the microphone with distress evident on his face. He explained that overnight, James Stankovich, president of Santa Clara, CA Br. 1427 and a delegate to the convention, had died unexpectedly.

The president asked the delegates to “observe a moment of silence for dearly departed Brother Jim Stankovich,” whom he had known since he was an RAA in Region 1. The lights in the hall were dimmed and when he lifted his head, Young wiped a tear from his left cheek.

He then recognized a microphone in the rear of the hall, where many California delegations are located. Ray Fong of San Francisco Br. 214 said Stankovich, 60, had “devoted his life to the union,” and left behind his wife and eight children. He asked if delegates would “pass the hat” to help the family defray the cost of returning the body to California.

Hardly had the collection begun than another brother made a motion that the national union should match any funds collected, an idea that was universally endorsed. Sometime later, the branch executive vice president, Darcie Gardea—now thrust into the job of president—came to the stage as Young announced that the Board of Tellers had counted more than \$12,600 in contributions. Less than a half-hour later, he

discovered that was only a partial report and the final total was \$27,000—meaning \$54,000 for the family after the match.

APWU President Burrus

About an hour into the proceedings, President Young welcomed to the stage an historic guest—William Burrus, the president of the American Postal Workers’ Union. “Bill and I have a long history together,” Young said, “and we have a lot in common—besides both being named ‘Bill.’”

“We both apprenticed under legendary presidents,” he said, referring to NALC’s Vince Sombrotto and Moe Biller, the long-serving president of the APWU—two leaders who found themselves both united as allies and at loggerheads for two decades.

Never before had an APWU president been invited to appear before the NALC’s supreme body, and Burrus called the invitation from Young “a bold move by a bold leader.” He told delegates he had in turn invited Young to speak at the APWU’s 19th biennial gathering next month in Las Vegas.

Burrus noted many of the causes and accomplishments the sister unions have shared over the years, including the 1970 strike, when the New York postal workers local headed by Biller gave critical support to the letter carrier walkout led by Sombrotto.

“We negotiated together the first contract with the Postal Service, and we were together on the first contract rejection in 1978,” Burrus said.

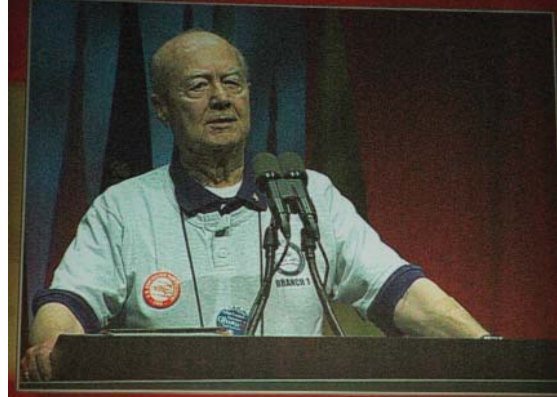
“In 1990, we worked together to create the Postal Employees’ Relief Fund,” the charity formed in the wake of the twin disasters of Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta earthquake. More recently, the two unions combined forces in January to sue the Postal Service’s Office of the Inspector General over OIG’s illegal accessing of personal medical information.

“In this changing world, no one is strong enough to go it alone,” Burrus said. “Despite all our successes, our future will be determined by our ability to work together.”

While he cautioned no one should read too much into his appearance before the NALC, Burrus said, “The strength of working people is being together (and) we must find new ways to work together.”



President of the American Postal Workers Union William Burrus receives a warm welcome from the convention delegates.



President Emeritus Jim Rademacher

President Emeritus Rademacher’s address

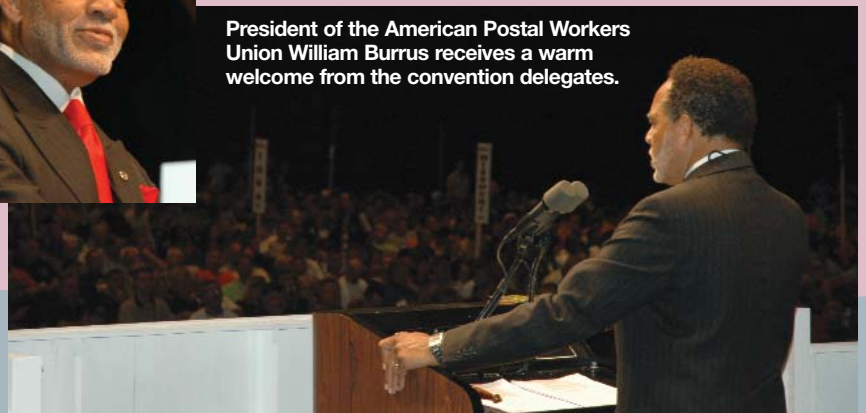
President Young introduced President Emeritus James H. Rademacher, who received a sustained ovation as he came to the microphone. The energetic, 87-year-old Rademacher began by saying he was happy to have been present for Tuesday’s building rededication ceremony honoring President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto.

“No one I know deserves (such a) tribute more than Vince,” he said.

Sombrotto ran against Rademacher twice in the tumultuous 1970s and lost; after Rademacher retired, Sombrotto defeated his successor, Joe Vacca, and went on to serve as president for almost 24 years.

“Vince Sombrotto was a great opponent,” Rademacher said. “He made me work harder” for the nation’s letter carriers.

As he surveyed the convention hall, he quipped that for years at NALC conventions the watch-word was, “Don’t let Rademacher get near a microphone,” then he reminded the delegates, “The past is prologue and there’s nothing you can do about it. But you can affect the future.”



A heart-felt thank you

Delegates' emotional control was challenged again when a delegate from Atlantic City, NJ Br. 370 rose to say Maureen DePrince wanted to express to the Convention her thanks to all NALC members. Sister DePrince was on her route when she was struck by a car driven by a drunken driver. She lost both her legs and suffered a series of strokes that left her blind. The accident happened just days before the 2006 convention and, after the national union matched delegate contributions for her, DePrince received some \$90,000.

President Young called DePrince up to the stage. After her husband pushed her wheelchair onto the speakers' stand, she was given a microphone and a camera was positioned so she could be seen on the big screens.

"I can't be any more thankful than I am to be a member of Branch 370," she began, "and it's an unbelievable feeling to know that I'm loved by so many people."

"Ever since that day"—DePrince paused to collect herself and began again. "I want you to know that I am so thankful for all the



An overwhelmed Maureen DePrince thanks the members for their generous donations.

cards and letters and donations and..." Her voice faltered and then she stopped, unable to go on. The hall was hushed as President Young took the microphone from her, then exploded with noise as he led a letter carrier cheer while she was wheeled off stage.

AFL-CIO delegates

Just after noon, President Young called for nominations for NALC delegates to the AFL-CIO convention. Although 21 individuals were nominated from the floor, only 15 completed the forms required to appear on the ballot. Voting will be conducted Thursday.

There are seven delegate positions. The candidates will be listed on the ballot in this order, which was determined by a random drawing:

Charles Heege, Br. 36, New York, NY
Jacquelyn Stephenson, Br. 2309, Arlington, TX
Denise Brooks, Br. 1433, Medford, OR
Ingrid Armada, Br. 15, Providence, RI
Anita Guzik, Br. 24, Los Angeles, CA

Phillip Wilkes, Br. 11, Chicago, IL
David Hyman, Br. 2902, Tri-Valley, CA
Terry Oberly, Br. 273, Lancaster, PA
Mary C. Pardo, Br. 421, San Antonio, TX
Stephen R. Hanna, Br. 509, York, PA
Willie Little, Br. 2525, Escondido, CA
Michael Barrett, Br. 226, Fort Worth, TX
Anthony Kittrell Jr., Br. 142 Washington, DC
Lou Wagner, Br. 56, Grand Rapids, MI
Lloyd P. Doucet Jr., Br. 124 New Orleans, LA

'A Better Way'

It was just after 12:30 when President Young introduced the video "Fighting for a Better Way." He recalled the multi-front effort last year that raised the pressure on the Postal Service to reach a settlement on the question of Article 32, Subcontracting, which provoked an impasse in contract negotiations. The video noted that Young had warned at the Honolulu Convention in 2004 of USPS plans to "make all new routes Highway Contract Routes"—part of the misguided business strategy that led to CDS.

The video features rank-and-file letter carriers, whose routes were affected by subcontracted labor, as well as local officers from South Florida Branch 1071, and Portland, Oregon Branch 92, and National Business Agents Judy Willoughby and Paul Price. It includes interviews with contract workers themselves. From local street level to hearing rooms on Capitol Hill, the NALC is shown relentlessly pushing back the Postal Service's do-it-on-the-cheap campaign.

"It's a bad deal for the American public," President Young says at one point. "If they wanted paperboys delivering their mail, they could use paperboys. They don't."

At another, Sen. Tom Harkin, who wrote the Mail Delivery Protection Act to ban subcontracting, says, "The stated argument you hear from the Postal Service about contracting out is that they need to cut cost. But that's just a cover. What they really want to do is cut corners. And really what they want to do is, they want to break the union."

The video recounts the union's political/legislative strategy and emphasizes it was effective because it was backed up by the members, who contacted lawmakers and turned out on picket lines.

"The battle against contracting out is not over. It won't be over until we reach either an agreeable resolution in our Article 32 committee (talks) or we pass a law prohibiting contracting out in this country," Young says near the end of the video. "So our members have to stay diligent and they have to continue to follow through when they're requested to take action."

"It ain't over," he says. "It ain't over."

Credentials report

President Young called Carol Maggio, chair of the Credentials Committee, to the

stage for her final report.

Maggio said a total of 7,417 delegates had registered—28 national officers, 72 delegates-at-large, and 7,317 branch delegates. All 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are represented at the Convention, which is the eighth largest in the union's history, ahead of St. Louis in 1992, but behind Honolulu in 2004.

Maggio, of San Francisco Br. 214, introduced the members of the committee:

Albert Anchondo, Br. 505, El Paso, TX; **Carole Ann Connelly**, Br. 84, Pittsburgh, PA; **Marie Didier**, Br. 825, Elmhurst, IL; **John Dyce**, Br. 385, Youngstown, OH; **Ronnie Eudy**, Br. 950, Abilene, TX; **Tom Gates**, Br. 916, Eugene, OR; **Rod Holub**, Br. 1018, Manhattan, KS; **Ed Killion**, Br. 34, Boston, MA; **Don McQuigg**, Br. 4319, Anchorage, AK; **Rick Olek Jr.**, Br. 205, Fargo-N. Fargo, ND.

Also, **Carol Ann Rasmus**, Br. 67, Elizabeth, NJ; **Bill Rogers**, Br. 507, Madison, WI; **Ronda Sisk**, Br. 443, Hagerstown, MD; **Gary Smith**, Br. 56, Grand Rapids, MI; **William Kirt Sullivan**, Br. 1779, Lakeland, FL; **Tim Whacker**, Br. 2778, Sparks, NV; **Monica Walker**, Br. 129, Baton Rouge, LA; **Mike Williams**, Br. 47, Denver, CO; **James Yates**, Br. 6000, Long Island, NY.

Recommended per diem

Board of Trustees Chairman Larry Brown presented the board's recommendation for a mileage and per diem allowance, and for other expenditures under Rule 20 of the Convention.

The recommended per diem for those eligible was \$197 lost time per day; daily single-occupancy hotel rate, \$186; meals and incidentals, \$64; for a total \$447 daily for delegates authorized mileage and per diem.

In recognition of service to the Convention by members of various committees, the trustees recommended gratuities for individuals under Rule 20 in the following amounts:

Credentials Committee (20 members), \$900; to the Chair, \$1,000. Total expenditure \$19,000.

Board of Tellers (33), \$500; Election Commissioner, \$700; total, \$17,200.

Distribution Committee (30) \$400; Chair, \$500; total, \$12,500.

Health Benefits Committee (7) and **MBA committee** (6), \$300; total, \$3,900.

Retirement Committee supplemental members (4), \$500; total, \$2,000.

Rules Committee (5), \$200; total, \$1,000.

Committee on the President's Biennial Report (6), \$200; total, \$1,200.

Mileage and Per Diem Committee (3), \$200; total, \$600.
Committee to Extend Fraternal Greetings to the Auxiliary (4), \$200; total, \$800.

Total recommended expenditure: \$58,500 for 115 delegates.

Delegates approved the report without dissent. The Mileage and Per Diem Committee will deliver its report later in the week.

Overseas guests

Two overseas labor leaders addressed the delegates. First was Philip Bowyer, deputy general secretary of Union Network International, the umbrella group for service sector workers. All told, UNI has 15 million members in more than 100 countries, some



3 million of them postal employees.

Bowyer, a regular visitor to recent NALC conventions, told the delegates that with globalization of the economy and the spread of multinational employers, "The hour has come for global unions" like UNI, and "what UNI is, is you," giving labor a voice before numerous global institutions.

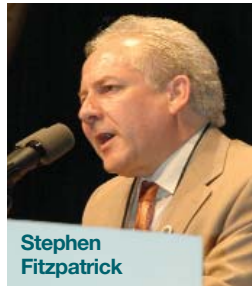
Philip Bowyer

Striking a theme heard from earlier speakers, he stressed that "the only way we can maintain our living standards is to make sure workers around the world are organized."

Stephen Fitzpatrick, president of the Communications Workers Union in Ireland, began by saying the NALC's decision to endorse Barack Obama for president "was a welcome one."

This year's U.S. presidential vote, he said, "is the one election in the world where everyone would like to have a vote."

He emphasized the commonality of the letter carrier's job around the world. "We are there for the elderly. We are there for the poor and the handicapped.... We treat everybody the same and nobody else can say that."



Stephen Fitzpatrick

2008 e-Activist awards

President Young presented awards to branches, states and regions with the highest percentage of members who have joined the e-Activist Network.

BRANCHES:

50-100 members—Branch 4102 Scotch Plains, NJ

101-200 members—Branch 4317, Great Valley Merged, PA

201-300 members—Branch 219, Aurora, IL

301-400 members—Branch 916, Emerald Empire Branch, Eugene, OR

401-500 members—Branch 29, Albany, NY

501-600 members—Branch 5521, Shawnee Mission, Kansas

601-700 members—Branch 320, North Oakland County, MI

701-1,500 members—Branch 3126, Royal Oak, MI

1,501-2,500 members—Branch 43, Cincinnati, OH

2,501 or more members—Branch 70, San Diego, CA

Branch with the highest percentage of e-Activists:

Branch 219, Aurora, IL

STATES:

First—North Dakota, State Chair Rick Olek

Second—Kentucky, State Chair Bob McNulty

Third—Oregon, State Chair Steve Devereaux

REGIONS:

First—Region 12, NBA Bill Lucini

Second—Region 6, NBA Pat Carroll

Third—Region 3, NBA Neal Tisdale

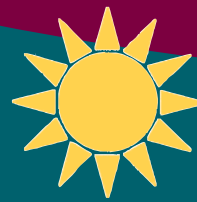
Committee introductions

President Young called forward the members of two committees. National Director of Safety and Health Brian Hellman, who heads the Uniform Committee, introduced members Tom Gavin, Branch 17, Scranton, PA; and Stafford Price, Branch 11, Chicago, IL.

Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland introduced the Retirement Committee:

McDowell Frazier, Br. 24, Los Angeles, CA; Doug Gulley, Br. 78, Columbus, OH; Norm LeFrois, Br. 210, Rochester, NY; Donald Southern, Br.1071, South Florida; and John Walsh, Br. 29, Albany, NY. The committee was supplemented during the convention by Daney Collins, Br. 361, Central Kentucky; Steve Martinez, Br. 576, Phoenix, AZ; Cheryl Stately, Br. 9, Minneapolis, MN; and Kenneth Stephens Jr., Br. 106, Montgomery, AL.

After a few announcements by Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel, the Convention adjourned at 1:53 p.m. until 10 a.m. Thursday, July 24.



NALC AUXILIARY Wednesday, July 23

The Dayton Letter Carrier Band, under the direction of Hal Harris, provided great entertainment for the delegates as the NALCA business session convened Wednesday morning.

Lynne Jester (Aux. 123—Waukesha, Wisconsin) provided a moment of grace and led the delegates in the reading of the collect.

Jester, chair of the Mileage and Per Diem Committee, introduced her committee, which reported the amounts for each officer's hotel, air and per diem expenses during this National Convention. The report was approved. A motion was also made to pay airfare for each NALCA officer to the 2010 National Convention. That motion carried.

The Bylaws Committee continued their recommendations of actions on bylaws to the delegates. The actions taken are part of the recorded minutes.

The chair recognized Peggy Morris, who gave special thanks and recognition to NALCA Secretary Gloria Alexander for her years of diligent service to NALCA and wished her a joyous retirement.

A preliminary report of charitable donations was distributed. More donations have been made since the report was typed and a final report will be given during Thursday's session.

Alexander reported that all candidates in nomination for office are duly qualified and have been properly endorsed in accordance with NALCA bylaws. The following nominations were made: president: Linda Kirby, vice president: Bonnie Christy, secretary: Marie Rasmussen, treasurer: Kathy Miller, assistant secretary: Edie Pottenger, and bylaws director: Cythensis Lang. In accordance with NALCA bylaw Article VI, Section 6(a), the nominated officers were duly declared elected for the 2008-2010 term.

The meeting recessed at 10:20 a.m. Delegates and guests then proceeded to the *Spirit of Boston* for a delightful luncheon harbor cruise. A "Chinese auction" was held for Boston souvenir items donated by NALCA officers. The \$218 raised from this auction will be donated to COLCPE.

*M. Marie Rasmussen,
NALCA Assistant Secretary*



Scenes from the Auxiliary's
"Boston Sea Party."

