



Important updates

The yearly national biweekly dues change will take place in Pay Period 1 of 2012 (Dec. 17-30, 2011). This change will be reflected in the dues that will be deducted beginning with the Jan. 6 paycheck. As a result, the dues increase will be incorporated into the branch reimbursement checks dated Jan. 27.

The minimum dues structure set forth in Article 7, Section 2 (a) of the NALC Constitution is the equivalent of two hours base pay for an NALC Grade 1, Step D letter carrier per month. Since dues are deducted biweekly, this amount will be \$23.21 for 2012. National retains one-third of this amount, \$7.74, and remits the other two-thirds to the local branches (with some withheld for state associations and remitted by National Headquarters to the state associations monthly).

Some branches may have set dues higher than the minimum dues structure and may increase local dues during the year, as may some state associations. Any increase in a branch's local dues cannot be processed before Pay Period 4 (Jan. 31).

Note: Dues corrections or changes to be made in 2011 cannot be processed after Nov. 8.

Open Season for choosing a health benefit plan is Nov. 14- Dec. 12, and I strongly encourage all NALC members to consider enrolling in the Health Benefit Plan, the NALC's own union-run health benefit plan. NALC health benefit representatives and branch officers are reminded that any USPS employee, regardless of bargaining or non-bargaining status, must be a full dues-paying member of the NALC. An associate membership is available only to retirees and non-postal federal employees. These enrollees of the NALC Health Benefit Plan pay a \$36 fee per year, which is billed in the early part of the year.

CLUW convention—Along with Myra Warren, director of the Mutual Benefit Association, I was grateful to have the opportunity to attend the 16th national convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women in Orlando in

September. CLUW was formed in 1974 to further the interests of female trade unionists and to fight for the rights of working women in general. The convention heard a variety of speakers on issues such as equal pay for women, public-sector union-busting, strengthening Social Security, and health insurance reforms. There were workshops on the above-named issues as well as on the history of the labor movement, raising funds and other subjects meant to strengthen the labor movement.

I was also privileged to be asked to speak on behalf of letter carriers and other postal employees on the *true* financial picture of the Postal Service, the responsibility of Congress to act to enable the Service to continue on a sound financial footing, and the challenges the NALC faces as we enter collective bargaining. Delegates to the convention were extremely supportive of letter carriers and all postal employees, passing a resolution titled "Stop the U.S. Postal Service from Closing," which calls on CLUW members to support H.R. 1351. I know we can count on CLUW and the entire labor movement to assist us in meeting the challenges ahead.

MDA Fill the Satchel day—A cold, windy and somewhat wet day did not dampen the enthusiasm of letter carriers in this area from getting out with their satchels in prime spots to raise funds to help deliver the cure to those afflicted with muscular dystrophy. It was my pleasure and honor to assist Washington, DC Branch 142 members Tyler Williams and Sharon Sutton, along with Sister Sutton's children and a young friend in asking the public to fill the satchel for MDA.

This Veterans Day marks the 93rd anniversary of the first Armistice Day, when the guns of World War I fell silent across Europe. This year, let all of us give thanks to the men and women of the armed forces and the National Guard, as well as their families, for the great sacrifices they have made. To all those serving abroad, particularly in Afghanistan, we express our thanks for their dedication and our wishes for a safe return. ☒