



Delivering messages to the membership

What makes our union so great is that the membership has access to the union leadership at all levels of the organization. Throughout my career, I have always told future leaders that it is critical to listen to what members say. They will provide you with the wisdom and guidance to move the organization forward. Never think that you have all the answers. Everyone has something to offer and we can learn from each other.

One of the difficult tasks that leaders face is when they need to discuss a subject or inform a member of something that is negative. Sometimes a member might be upset over things that are happening to them at work and, as leaders, we need to understand and listen to the member's concerns. Patience and understanding are important. Never let the conversation stray or let it become negative or personal.

As leaders, we need to separate the issue from pre-conceived opinions or comments. Every member has a voice and, regardless of how little an issue may seem to someone or to others, it is a big issue to the member who is asking. We should investigate and advise the member of the decision and provide an explanation to the member. Yes, sometimes the answer may not be pleasing to the member, but part of our duties is to advise the member as to why the decision was made.

Don't let a negative decision stand in your way of responding to the member. Avoidance does not make the situation better. Delivering the message properly affects how it will be perceived. Don't be combative. A straightforward response is the best method. Be direct and sensitive to the nature of the issue. The member may be unhappy but, in the long run, most people will understand and respect the fact that you responded. Nothing should break that bond between the member and the leadership. Members must feel that they can always rely on the leadership to respond to them in a fair and honest manner.

This is what makes the NALC the greatest union. Let me provide a little "credo" that I found and modified to suit our needs:

Because the member has a need,

We have a job to do.

Because the member has concerns,

We need to listen and be considerate.

Because the member has an urgency,

We need to be responsive.

Because the member has expectations,

We need to do our best.

Because of the member,

We exist.

If we follow these basic principles, we can rest assured that the members will feel comfortable with their leaders. Together, we can and will be able to confront any obstacles that confront us. Remember that the objectives of the NALC are to fraternally unite all letter carriers and other Postal Career Service members for their mutual benefit, to obtain and secure our rights as employees of the United States Postal Service, and to strive at all times to promote the safety and the welfare of every member.

As a reminder to everyone in regard to the Combined Federal Campaign, you can make a pledge to two of our causes through that program. The Postal Employees' Relief Fund CFC number is #10268 and the Muscular Dystrophy Association CFC number is #10561. Both of these causes need our support. Deductions can be made directly from your biweekly pay. Thanks for your assistance.

As I close out my article for this month, remember that it is Open Season for the Health Benefit Plan. Check out the NALC HBP insert in this month's *Postal Record*. President Rolando, Director of the Health Benefit Plan Brian Hellman and Trustees Larry Brown, Randall Keller and Mike Gill have done an outstanding job keeping the premiums down and increasing benefits. Without a doubt, it is truly one of the best plans out there. Whether you are an active or retired letter carrier, the NALC Health Benefit Plan has you and your family covered. Open Season runs from Nov. 14 to Dec. 12. Join today!

Have a great Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. ☒