



There ain't no cure for the summertime blues...

It's been a long, hot summer; for most of the country, it's been one of the hottest in recent memory. While other workers are able to seek shelter in air-conditioned offices or vary their schedules to avoid the worst of the summer heat and humidity, letter carriers faithfully arrive each day to carry their routes in some of the worst conditions imaginable.

The days of starting at 6 a.m. or earlier and getting done before the hottest part of the day are long gone. Thanks to DPS, FSS and revised distribution schedules, carriers have seen their starting times pushed later and later. In many locations, carriers don't begin tour until 8:30 or 9 a.m., which pushes their eight-hour day to 5 or 5:30 p.m. Those who work overtime are putting in eight or more hours on the street and not getting home until after 7 p.m., exhausted, dirty and drenched in sweat. About all they feel like doing is taking a shower, grabbing something cold to drink and crashing in their favorite chair. Yet each day they get back up to do it all over again, while some supervisor who stayed in the cool office all day questions why they took so long. Hang in there, heroes; the cooler days of fall are just ahead.

During this summer, the NALC continued to be active on the education front. In June, an arbitration class for experienced advocates was held at the National Labor College. The week-long training focused on procedural and ethical issues as well as doing case analysis, developing strategies, countering management tactics and writing briefs.

In July, the NALC and USPS conducted joint training on the Article 15 intervention process in Denver, Philadelphia and St. Louis. NBAs, RAAs and other union activists participated in the three-day workshops, along with Postal Service area and district labor relations officials. The purpose of the training was to promote constructive and cooperative working relationships between USPS and NALC officials responsible for monitoring and maintaining the dispute resolution process.

In early August, Class 12 of the NALC Leadership Academy reported for its first week of training at the

National Labor College. Having been chosen way back in October, the students were eager to get to work. The session began by examining the history of the labor movement, including effects of the Homestead steelworkers' lockout, Pullman porters' organizing efforts and the 1970 postal strike. Students also had classes in leadership styles, characteristics of union leaders, ethical decision-making and teaching techniques. The week culminated with each student presenting a 15-minute teaching lesson.

As a reminder, the application period for the 2012 Leadership Academy is drawing to a close. Those wishing to attend must have their applications received at NALC Headquarters by Sept. 30. Application forms are available on the NALC website (nalc.org) or can be obtained from the national business agent's office. Any active member may apply for one of the 60 spots filled each year. Those who applied last year for the 2011 classes but were not selected need not reapply. However, they may send updated information to be added to their previously submitted applications and are encouraged to do so.

There will be two Leadership Academy classes in 2012. Each class consists of three weeks of instruction on a variety of subjects at the National Labor College located just outside the Washington beltway in Silver Spring, MD. Students also will be required to complete outside learning projects upon returning home following Weeks 1 and 2. Following graduation, the students will spend a week working in their national business agent's office.

The two classes for 2012 are scheduled as follows: Class 13 for the weeks of Jan. 8-13, March 11-16 and May 20-25. Class 14 is scheduled for Aug. 5-10, Oct. 7-12 and Dec. 2-7. Upon selection, students will be advised of the exact dates they will need to be available for each class. Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other associated costs while attending the Academy and working in the business agent's office are paid by the NALC. Anyone who is at all interested is encouraged to apply. ☒