

Shyam Das named arbitration chairman for next NALC-USPS national contract

The National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service have agreed on the selection of National Arbitrator Shyam Das to serve as chairman of the three-person arbitration board that will set the terms of the next collective-bargaining agreement between the two parties.

“Through this step of the process, as we have all along, we will vigorously defend letter carriers’ wages and bene-



fits and seek to advance our bargaining goals,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “Those goals include achieving the best possible contract for our members and laying the groundwork for a revival of the Postal Service.”

Das has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1977 and is a member of the American Arbitration Association’s labor panel. He has served on national arbitration panels involving postal workers since 1996, and he has

chaired arbitration proceedings involving United Steelworkers and the Major League Baseball Players Association.

The arbitration board is now working on a schedule for hearings. Once arbitration is underway, those hearings and related testimony could last for several months. After those proceedings are complete, the arbitration panel will meet to come up with a final, binding “award” that sets the terms of the next contract.

The last time an NALC-USPS agreement was reached through interest arbitration was in 1999. ☒



H. Keith Ray (c) shows off the honor he received from the Department of Justice. Flanking him are postal inspectors who heard his story and passed it on.

Carrier honored by DOJ

St. Louis, MO Branch 343 member H. Keith Ray was recognized on May 23 by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The award was presented by Acting Administrator of the OJJDP Mel Hanes at a ceremony to commemorate National Missing Children’s Day, intended to “honor the heroic and exemplary efforts of agencies, organizations and individuals who protect children.”

As reported in the June *Postal Record*, Ray was making his usual delivery to an elementary school on his route on Feb. 25, 2011, when he saw a flurry of police activity. The carrier was told that a first-grader, a boy with autism, had been reported missing from the school playground. Ray turned to the school principal. “Can I help?” he asked. “I’ve got my vehicle outside.”

He began searching around a pond nearby. It was winter and there was snow on the ground, and so, Ray thought, “He’s got to be cold.” Noticing tracks in the snow, the letter carrier turned his attention to a nearby chapel that appeared to be closed. He entered and found the young boy inside, jumping over pews.

“This is your lucky day,” Ray told the child, who happens to be the son of a

postal policeman in St. Louis. “You get to ride in a mail truck.” He wasn’t sure how the child would react, but the boy approached Ray, grabbed his hand and said, “Let’s go.” So, Ray loaded him in his LLV and drove the youngster back to the school before continuing on his route.

Ray, a Coast Guard veteran, said he doesn’t think he is a hero, saying that he was just taught by his mother and grandmother to help others. “I think I just did what was instinctive,” he said.

Word got around of the 30-year postal veteran’s actions. The elementary school contacted the local post office where Ray worked, and by March 2012, the information had made its way to Washington, DC, where a postal inspector heard about Ray and nominated him for the honor.

“Keith’s selfless actions on that cold day represent countless letter carriers whose actions in helping patrons on their routes often go unrecognized,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “We couldn’t be more proud of Keith’s dedication to his community and his work in helping to save a young child from potential harm.”

Ray said he is proud of the award, but that it wasn’t anything he was expecting. “My reward was getting that boy back to school,” he said. ☒

Correction:

In the June issue of the *Postal Record*, we announced that Bertie Geng, son of Zhengyi Geng of Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000, had won a 2012 NALC scholarship. In fact, Bertie is the daughter of Zhengyi. Bert, Zhengyi’s son, won the same scholarship in 2010.

20th food drive nets 70.5 million pounds

For the ninth consecutive year, the NALC's national "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive has netted a collection total that surpassed 70 million pounds.

Although several local NALC branches were still compiling their figures as this *Postal Record* was being prepared, the official count already showed a figure of more than 70.5 million pounds of non-perishable food collected, topping last year's 70.2 million pounds and bringing the grand total to more than 1.2 billion pounds collected since the annual nationwide drive began in 1993.

"Six days a week, we deliver mail to every address in America, so letter carriers see firsthand the needs in the communities we work in," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and we're honored to lead this effort that brings out the best in so many of our customers.

"This year's impressive results will enable the food pantries and other charities that we supply across the country to help feed the tens of million Americans risk going hungry every single day," he said.

The largest annual one-day drive in America, the Stamp Out Hunger event takes place on the second Saturday in May in thousands of cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Thousands of letter carriers from

more than 1,400 branches, alongside family members, volunteers from management and the other postal crafts, plus concerned citizens, all lend a hand to help make the drive a success. This year marked the NALC's 20th annual nationwide drive.

"Letter carriers are in every neighborhood in every town, six days a week, and we have always been involved when something needs to be done," Rolando said, noting the NALC's longtime involvement with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the Carrier Alert program and the Cities' Readiness Initiative in addition to the national food drive.

The spring timing is important because food banks and pantries by then often are close to running out of the donations they received during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday periods. "By helping to replenish food bank stocks now, millions of children who will lose access to free or reduced costs school breakfast and lunch programs will have someplace else to turn," Rolando said.

The good results this year were achieved despite the continuing tough economy, which makes the drive all the more important, he added.

A complete report on branch collections, plus numerous photos and a sampling of the positive media coverage that the drive generates will appear in next month's edition of *The Postal Record*. ☒



Top: Beckie Marcell of Branch 2846 Iron River, MI, shows off her haul.

Above: Upland, CA Mayor Ray Musser helps the Branch 2168 Executive Board promote their drive.

Below: Volunteers and members of Beaumont, TX Branch 842 smile after a long, but successful, day.



Convention care package project set Collections will support carriers in the military

Volunteers from both the NALC convention and the NALC Auxiliary convention—both of which will be held later this month in Minneapolis—will work together to collect donated, pre-packaged items from delegates that will be mailed to NALC members who are on active military duty.

Some items are prohibited, such as obscene or pornographic material, liquor, cigarettes and aerosol cans.

Volunteers also plan to distribute postcards for delegates to write personal messages of support and thanks to our members who are serving in the military. These postcards will then be placed in boxes with the goods collected.

USPS gurneys featuring labels and posters to identify collection points for this drive will be positioned at several locations throughout the Minneapolis Convention Center July 23-27. ☒

Here are some examples of requested items:

- beef jerky
- shampoo
- deodorant
- prepaid phone cards
- baby wipes
- lip balm
- lotion
- AA batteries
- playing cards
- energy bars
- chewing gum