

Letter from the Editor

At this point in NALC's history, we are all about change: not only helping the Postal Service adapt to a changing society, but also changing the conventional wisdom about the Postal Service; changing the media's reporting on the USPS; changing public understanding about the best policy fixes for the Postal Service's financial woes; and changing the political views and political composition of Congress so the legislation will be changed.

These efforts involve a common task: changing minds—whether among the public, press or politicians.

This is not, as President Rolando has remarked to me more than once, an easy—or quick—process. It requires getting people to challenge their own assumptions. That won't be done with slogans or sound bites, but rather by getting people to listen to what we're saying, absorb information that initially surprises them, and then rethink what they thought they knew.

That's why we write and speak the way we do about the situation, in ways aimed at bringing people along—logically, methodically, one mind at a time—by their own thought processes, instead of hammering them with a slew of numbers or opinions.

(Bill Clinton's understanding of these dynamics of persuasion enabled him to give easily the best speech at either party's convention. Rather than merely assert or exhort and hope his audience would believe him, he offered competing visions for the country before providing information so listeners could conclude for themselves which made more sense.)

This brings us to Julie Todich, vice president of the Utah State Association. Exasperated recently by the anti-government and anti-union Facebook postings of a former high school classmate, Todich ran into him at the Utah State MDA Texas Hold 'Em event in Salt Lake City. A mutual friend who observed their conversation about the Postal Service sent the man—a Denver-based business executive—a copy of Todich's op-ed piece in the *Vernal* (UT) *Express*.

He read it, and sent Todich a note that said, in part, "As I read your op-ed below, I marvel at your communicative power and command of the subject matter as much as (at) your measured and thoughtful tone...I read it twice and just shook my head at its eloquence..."

"But the best compliment I can give you is that I was PERSUADED by it and now (am) much more sympathetic to your plight and that of your fellow co-workers. I don't know all the particulars about your industry and some of the circumstances surrounding it that do seem to be unique—and thus punitive—to just the USPS—but I am curious to find out."

Motivated indeed "to find out," he did some research and, within a couple of weeks, was so energized by his new insight into the issues that he offered to do whatever he can to help the NALC persuade others about the actual situation.

Multiply him several-fold and you get a sense of the nature, and extent, of the change you are sparking—all the more, if you consider the other recent media efforts of letter carriers. Among them:

President Rolando had powerful op-ed pieces in the *Arizona Republic* and *Register-Guard* (OR), a letter to the editor in the *Columbian* (WA), and was quoted extensively in a *Wall Street Journal* article debunking prevailing myths about the Postal Service. He also released a radio news feed for hundreds of radio stations across the country urging lawmakers, upon returning to Congress from the summer recess, to fix the financial damage they've done to the USPS.

Region 13 NBA Tim Dowdy was interviewed on the radio show "The Union Edge," and Wisconsin State President Scott Van Derven had a letter about military veterans as letter carriers in Milwaukee's *Journal Sentinel*. Lake Charles, LA Branch 914 member Cheryl Billeaudeau was interviewed by NBC affiliate KPLC-TV about letter carrier efforts in Lake Charles for muscular dystrophy. Bob Drayer, a Kansas City letter carrier since 1958, and a Branch 30 member, led a *Kansas City Star* story on worker loyalty. Racine, WI Branch 436 member Daniel Wendt was featured in a *Journal Times* story about the Carrier Alert program. And Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56, led by President Gary Smith, ran a half-page ad on postal finances in a regional labor publication.

You are, quite simply, changing how Americans think about the Postal Service. ☒



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