

Thousands attend NALC convention workshops



**Jamie
Lumm**

There was something for everyone. Dozens of workshops on a wide variety of subjects were offered at the 69th NALC convention in Philadelphia, and the delegates responded accordingly. National officers, headquarters staff, branch officers, rank-and-file letter carriers and a few outside professionals combined to present classes on such topics as branch officer fiduciary duties, legislative programs, postal economics, health benefits, life insurance, branch publications, contract administration, city delivery, grievance handling, safety and health, retirement, OWCP and many others. Letter carriers by the thousands got up early each morning

and stayed late each afternoon to attend workshops held prior to and following the convention business sessions. This is a testament to the leadership of President Rolando, who has made the education of the membership one of his top priorities.

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It’s a far cry from my first conventions that started late, ended early and had almost no educational opportunities. It wasn’t until my fourth, in Portland in 1988, that I attended any workshops, and by then I’d already been director of education in my home state of Washington for more than two years. I recall sitting in the front row of the Contract Administration Unit and City Delivery workshops that year in half-filled rooms that, at most, held 500. This year, as at recent conventions, the CAU and City Delivery workshops had to be held twice, in packed rooms seating more than 2,000, to accommodate the members’ hunger for knowledge. As director of education, I am awed and honored to be part of this great union.

I am also honored to have been able to hold the four-day Shop Steward Training School (SSTS) in Philadelphia, as we did two years ago in Minneapolis, and humbled by the 1,000-plus delegates who attended each of the four afternoon sessions after most of them had already put in eight hours at the morning workshops and the general convention business session. Maybe I should thank the Postal

Service for making us all used to working 10-plus hours a day, but I won’t. Instead, I’ll attribute this to the tireless dedication of the many shop stewards who desire knowledge and the power that comes with it to better represent and assist their members back home.

I want to thank the many folks who helped make the 2014 SSTS happen. Bill Bothwell, in addition to being my co-presenter, was there every step of the way doing the lion’s share of the backstage management, coordinating the audio/visual and doing his best to keep us moving within our time limitations. I am also grateful to those who gave up much of their own time to help bring to life the grievance that we followed from incident through arbitration. They are: Shawn Boyd, Heidi Bothwell, Kevin Card, John Collins, Steve Hanna, George Hatem, Kyle Inosencio, Patty Joseph, Ron Morgan, Lynne Pendleton, Tim Sheehan, Christine Vitone-Stern, Corey Walton, Sue Wellhausen and Jim Williams. It was an honor to work with you all.

So now another convention is history, and we already are thinking about how we can make the workshops even better for 2016. I can’t wait.

Leadership Academy applications due by Aug. 31

The application period for the 2015 Leadership Academy ends on Aug. 31. Application forms are available for download on the NALC website (nalc.org), or can be obtained from your national business agent’s office. Any active NALC member may apply for one of the 60 spots available. NALC President Fred Rolando encourages interested NALC members to submit an application. Those selected will be notified by mail in October. If you have applied previously and were not chosen, please reapply. Persistence is a valued leadership trait.

Each leadership class consists of three separate weeks of instruction on a variety of subjects. Class 19 is scheduled for January 11-16, March 22-27 and May 31-June 5. Class 20 is scheduled for July 26-31, Sept. 27-Oct. 2 and Dec. 6-11.

Students also are required to complete outside learning projects upon returning home following Weeks 1 and 2, and upon graduation the students will spend a fourth week working in their national business agents’ offices.

Classes will be held at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum Heights, MD, near BWI-Marshall Airport outside Baltimore. Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other costs involved with attending the Academy and working in the business agent’s office are paid by the NALC.

There is only a short time left to apply. If you are at all interested, please submit an application—you have nothing to lose and a whole new outlook to gain.