

# Make your NALC New Year's resolution



**Nicole Rhine**

**I**t's that time again. The year 2014 has arrived, and it's time to make resolutions for things you either want to do, or want to stop doing, in the new year. And while most New Year's resolutions tend to involve goals that are personal in nature, we really shouldn't forget about our fellow members, our branch and our union.

So I'm asking you to think about what you can do in 2014—not only for yourself, but for your job and your union.

Here are some NALC resolutions to consider:

- **Start going to branch meetings.** Branch meetings not only are where all decisions of your branch are discussed and voted on, but also a great place to become educated about the contract and to keep up on current events that could affect the Postal Service and, therefore, could affect you. Sadly, a majority of members do not go to the regular meetings of the branch. If you are in that majority, consider a change.
- **Volunteer to help out with a branch event.** Maybe your branch has a picnic, a retiree dinner, a holiday party or an MDA fundraiser, or participates in the food drive. Branch officers are always looking for members to help out with special branch events. Raise your hand this year. Not only will it be appreciated, but you'll feel good for doing it.
- **Thank your steward.** Being a station steward is a very difficult and stressful job. They have to be knowledgeable about the contract. They have to deal with management. They want to win every grievance. None of this is easy. But they have your back, so thank them.
- **Thank your branch officers.** See above reasoning and more. They spend a lot of their time dealing with branch matters and trying to do what is best for you. They are willing to step up and take a leadership role and represent you; so thank them.
- Maybe you already go to branch meetings, volunteer and are a steward or an officer in your branch. **Consider becoming a mentor.** You won't always be in your current role, so make sure you have other members ready to step in and take charge. Knowledge is meant to be passed along. And don't forget

about the NALC's Leadership Academy—convince someone to apply.

- **Learn the history of your branch.** This year, the NALC celebrates its 125th anniversary. Your branch history may be buried away in a box. Dust it off and take it to a branch meeting. Or maybe you unfortunately have nothing at all. Consider picking the brains of your retired members and documenting what they tell you. Maybe they have old photos they would let you scan. We should never forget where we came from.
- And while I'm on the subject of branch history, make a resolution to **take pictures of your members and of branch events.** But don't just leave them on your smart phone or iPad or in your camera—give them to your branch to keep. Print them out or send them electronically—they can always be used in a slide show at a branch event.
- If you're not already, **become a NALC e-Activist.** Join together with tens of thousands of other letter carriers to make your voice heard. NALC will send you e-mail alerts when it's time to act on issues affecting active and retired letter carriers and the future of the Postal Service. And when you do get that e-mail, be sure to act. As I stated in my October article, carriers in 1970 were willing to risk their jobs and their freedom for you when they walked away from their routes. Is it really asking too much to sign up as an e-Activist, then make a phone call or write a letter to your members of Congress to protect your job and your benefits? *All* of us need to work together to ensure that Congress does the right thing; not just a few of us. We must stand resolute against those who would like to destroy us. As President Rolando stated in last month's article, let's make the Postal Service the comeback story of 2014.
- **Start giving to COLCPE,** NALC's political action fund that helps elect friends of letter carriers. If you don't know how to sign up, ask a branch officer or go to the NALC website at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for instructions.
- **Consider following NALC on Facebook or Twitter** if you're not already—the links to do both are on the top of the NALC website home page.

**All of these resolutions have a common thread—to strengthen our branches and our union as a whole and to protect your job as a letter carrier. If you're not already doing the things I've listed, I hope you'll consider making one or, better yet, all of them your NALC resolution.**