

Taking a look at the *NALC Constitution* (continued)



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Last month's article talked about the *NALC Constitution*, specifically Article 1 and a brief history of the document. So this month, let's look at Articles 2 and 3.

Article 2: Branches, State Associations, Membership—Section 1 states: "Membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers shall be open without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, handicap, or marital status."

It further points out that the regular membership shall be non-supervisory employees in the Postal Service, regular branch members who the Executive Council has determined were unjustly separated from the Postal Service, retirees from that Service who were regular members of the NALC when they retired, and persons leaving the Service with coverage under Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). Such retirees, OWCP departees and non-letter carrier regular members shall have no voice or vote in the branch in any matter pertaining to the ratification of a national working agreement, local memorandum of understanding, or proposed work stoppage. This is the only restriction placed on their membership. They can fully participate in all other union business, including holding office at the branch, state or national levels.

This section also defines the process of filing for membership by filling out PS Form 1187. It states that any new member shall be provided by the NALC with a free copy of the current National Agreement and *NALC Constitution*. A PS Form 1189 is required for retirees desiring to continue their membership during retirement.

The rules and regulations for "Merger of Branches" is explained in Article 2, Section 3:

Each branch proposing to merge shall, within a period of ninety (90) days, have a regular or special meeting. Such meeting shall be held for the purpose of considering a resolution calling for merger after at least thirty (30) days notice of said meeting to each member, which notice shall set forth the details of the proposed merger.

One important part found in Section 3b is the language that states: "[W]hen a merger is formally voted upon and put into effect, it will be final and binding." Many presidential rulings have reaffirmed this provision. However, there is one provision that can challenge a merger and that provision is in Section 3i, which states:

[I]f a substantial complaint is raised following Branch merger voting, documentation and supporting evidence of the charge or charges must be submitted to the National President, within

thirty (30) days after such voting, who will in turn have the authority, upon review, to order a new vote to be taken among all members in each respective Branch seeking merger in accordance with the voting procedures as contained in the By-Laws of each respective Branch, and the National Constitution.

Article 2, Sections 5(a), (b) and (c) also provides information regarding years of NALC membership recognition, including the Life Membership card.

Article 3: Time and Place of Conventions and Special Meetings—The national convention is the most inspiring part of being a union officer, steward or delegate. Your first convention, like any other significant occasion in life, lasts in your memories. From the moment the bands play and the convention is called to order, through the singing of our National Anthem, to the adjournment on the final day, memories are made that last a lifetime.

My first convention was 1986 in St. Paul, MN. I can still remember arriving to register and meeting brothers and sisters from around the country. I must admit, every convention still gives me the same sense of pride and motivation of my first convention—especially when you touch base with those you don't see very often.

Article 3, Section 1 states:

The National Convention of this Union shall be held biennially in even-numbered years between the Fourth of July and third full week of August." The section also provides that "The time and place of the Convention to be held in the year 2002, and all subsequent Conventions, will be determined by the Executive Council of the National Association of Letter Carriers, eliminating the geographic regions which were the sites of the two previous Conventions.

Those who have attended a convention know how much material is handed out. Section 1 also requires that "Any materials and/or literature distributed at a National Convention must bear a union label."

Article 3 also includes language for both regional and national rap sessions. This year, many national business agents have held or will hold rap sessions in their respective regions. Last month, President Rolando held the national rap session in Houston, TX. The requirements for a national conference are found in Article 3, Section 4(b), which states:

The National President shall, once each year except in the year of the National Convention, call a national conference. This conference shall be voluntarily attended by only State and Branch Presidents or their designees, with their expenses to be borne by the State Association or Branch represented.

I hope all who attended found the session to be productive and assisted with providing that boost of unionism.

On another note, August is usually one of our hottest months. Everyone please be safe, stay hydrated and don't become a victim of the heat!