

Thriving into the future



**Judy
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Looking down the road, say 15 years from now, many of our current leaders at every level in NALC will be joining or have already joined the “last punch bunch.” So how do we ensure that NALC survives and thrives into the future?

Every leader should continue to work hard, mentor, educate and have their replacement(s) ready to succeed them. Our union is a democratic union, and those who rise to take traditional officer positions are elected (even if at first appointed). However, providing the necessary opportunities to learn will enhance our membership’s rank and file.

When I started my career as a letter carrier, the union leadership was there to provide me with valuable information about my job. This information was key to my being successful in passing my probation. Attending my branch union meetings allowed me to meet other members and learn about key issues, like legislation that may affect the job, workplace issues and other various activities of the union.

I quickly decided, after seeing some abusive managers, that I’d like to become a steward. However, I felt that before jumping into the fire, it would be best to study the collective-bargaining agreement and attend some union-sponsored educational classes. It was my branch leaders who encouraged me to get involved. Two individuals who mentored me in my first couple of years blazed that path for me. So, on a personal note, I’d like to thank both John W. Bourlon and O.D. Elliott for taking me in and providing that early education and positive encouragement that has helped me throughout my career.

NALC continues to provide education, information and opportunities to many. It is encouraging to see so many members stepping up to the plate at the local, state, regional and national levels to ensure that our members are represented at the highest level. During each officers’ training conducted, it has been great to see both new and old members attend and really engage during the training. Feedback has been superior in assisting the instructors in planning future classes. The feedback from other educational training classes—Formal Step A and beyond, arbitration advocacy, retirement, OWCP and more—has been exceptionally good. It takes not only those instructing but also those attending to make these classes what they are. It is with great pride that I can say, 15 years from now, NALC will be thriving.

Annual food drive

May is the month of many activities, from Mother’s Day to Memorial Day, but one day in particular comes to mind, and that is the day of our annual food drive. This year is its 25th anniversary year. I hope that we have another record year with our food collection. It is our communities and national and local sponsors, along with you, who make it such a huge success. It is so gratifying to see all the donations of food from each and every community. You never know when it might be you or a family member who is in need. With all the crazy weather we have been experiencing, it is comforting to know that, should a catastrophe hit your town or home, food will be available. I really never looked at it this way until seeing families ripped from their homes with little to nothing left. So let’s win gold in our silver-anniversary year. Thanks to all who participate; without you, it would not be a success.

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The NALC ‘Form of Ceremonial for Initiation of Candidates into Branches of the National Association of Letter Carriers’

Many branches use this ceremonial during branch meetings to greet new members into the union. As a member, I repeated this ceremonial when first joining. I pledged loyalty to the laws of the National Association of Letter Carriers now in force and those that may be adopted in the future, to assist in promoting the welfare and progress of the association and endeavor to practice and maintain the principles upon which it was formed, and to wrong no member or see no one wronged if I can prevent it.

We should all remember the above words as leaders in this great union, for it is those words that guide us to provide the best representation possible. As another one of my many mentors used to say: “Think about it.”