

Showtime!



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People who are old enough to remember the Los Angeles Lakers of the '80s are familiar with the term "showtime" as it relates to their basketball games *whenever* at the Forum during that era. (It was later perfected by Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls in the '90s *wherever* they played, but that's another story.) Over the years, I think of it as a term that is synonymous with any big event, usually sports, that was happening in the City of Angels.

So, with our national convention just a couple months away in L.A., I can't think of anything more appropriate to refer to this biennial gathering of the membership than the NALC's version of *showtime*. If this is your very first national convention, I believe you will be blown away by the humanity of more than 5,000 letter carriers from every place that has city letter carriers who work for the United States Postal Service.

Prior to our last convention in Boston, I wrote about the significance of our national convention and the roles of delegates in attendance. In this article I will borrow heavily from that column, but I want to also reference the *NALC Constitution* to give insight into the daily agenda during the convention. Just like in our bylaws, the order of business in this large "meeting" is stipulated in the *Constitution*. The direction of this union comes directly from the membership from the convention floor and/or from the resolutions and amendments submitted by the state associations and branches. The ultimate decisions come from what Article 1, Section 4 of the *Constitution* refers to as the "supreme body" of the NALC.

As provided by Article 4, Section 1 of the *NALC Constitution*, each branch having 20 or fewer members shall be entitled to one delegate and one vote in the national convention. Branches having more than 20 members shall be entitled to one delegate and one vote for each 20 members, or fraction thereof. The state associations are allowed two delegates-at-large. Together with the Executive Council, we chart the course for our union. The delegates also decide the final appeals of the members and what issues are presented for collective bargaining and our legislative priorities. There is so much that goes on during convention week, including classroom training sessions every day. That information and those schedules will be provided before the convention, and most locals use that as a guide to assign training courses for their represen-

tatives and delegates. These training sessions do not require the approval of your local to attend. So, I encourage all members to take advantage of the information that is provided while there at the convention. I have always maintained that stewards and officers should not be alone on the workroom floor educating and informing our members.

As for the convention itself, Monday is the opening day of the convention, following the reception the night before. The reception itself is a wonderful opportunity to meet and greet with the national officers and union buddies from across the country. Just keep in mind that those in attendance are all letter carriers, so consider them brothers and sisters who you have yet to meet. On Monday of the convention, the rules of the convention are presented and voted on, as well as the appointment of an election commissioner and the Board of Tellers by the chair (Article 6, Section 6, *NALC Constitution*). They oversee any election at the convention (such as for AFL-CIO delegates) or votes by the delegates on the floor. Monday also includes the required "statement of the condition of this association" by the Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine (Article 9, Section 4.a.)

Tuesday of the convention, before any other business is conducted, the delegates will consider any amendments to the *Constitution* that have been properly submitted (Article 19, Section 2, *NALC Constitution*). No other business will be considered until all proposed amendments have been voted on by the delegates (Article 21, Section 1(a), *NALC Constitution*). On Wednesday, the third day of the convention, or right after all proposed constitutional changes have been voted on, any retirees resolutions and any other business pertaining to retirees or retirement shall be taken care of (Article 21, Section 1(b), *NALC Constitution*). Also on Wednesday, every four years, officers and delegates to the AFL-CIO convention are nominated. Those qualifications, and the process of nominations, are spelled out in Article 6 of the *NALC Constitution*. Article 6 also provides for the appointment of the national election committee on Thursday of the convention for the nationwide election. All qualified regular members as of June 1 of this year are eligible to a vote (Article 6, Section 8, *NALC Constitution*.)

On the last day, Friday, all other remaining business is taken care of, and usually that includes appeals to the supreme body by members, branches or state associations. Throughout the convention week there will be plenty of guest speakers, debates, discussions, information pertaining to our craft and infomercials.

If this is your first convention and you are actively involved, it probably won't be your last. If you are not actively involved, you probably will be after this convention. In less than 90 days it's showtime again in L.A.!