



# NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE

MONDAY, JULY 28, COVERING THE FIFTH SESSION, FRIDAY, JULY 25



## FOCUSING ON OUR FUTURE

**C**losing a week that showcased the union's spirit of solidarity, strength and commitment, delegates meeting in this historic city in the NALC's 125th year turned from looking with pride at their past to looking forward to a bright future and readying for the challenge of securing it. This was a day to draw confidence from our past successes and apply it to our efforts across the country to preserve the service the American people have enjoyed since Philadelphia's favorite son, Benjamin Franklin, first led the Post Office in 1775.

Before the opening of Friday's session, arriving delegates were entertained by the Milwaukee letter carriers' band as well as by a video showing highlights from the biennial convention held in Honolulu in August of 1970, just a few months after that year's historic postal strike.

President Rolando called the convention to order at 10 a.m. with the airing of a highlight video of the week's events at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. He invited Minneapolis Branch 9 President Mike Zagaros to the microphone to sing

the National Anthem. Marge McCann of Philadelphia Branch 157 led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an invocation by Branch 157 Chaplain Lillian Young.

The convention then approved a motion offered from the floor to honor retiring NALC Auxiliary officers at future NALC retiring officers' dinners.

President Rolando next invited Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren to the podium. Warren introduced the members of the Uniform Committee: Chairman Tom Gavin of Scranton, PA Branch 17, and Stafford Price of Chicago Branch 11. The committee reported that it was working to convince USPS to allow carriers to wear several new items that would enhance their visibility in the dark and comfort in bad weather.

Warren then introduced the members of the Mutual Benefit Association Committee: Chairman Zulma Betancourt of West Coast Florida Branch 1477; Dan Torres of San Antonio, TX Branch 421; and Michael Keels of Seattle Branch 79. The committee reported that the MBA is in very good financial shape and continues to grow.



**Top: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) thundered about the need to save the Postal Service and the middle class.**

**Above: NALC offered a preview of its new website.**

### SEN. BERNIE SANDERS

Rolando next introduced Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), who came to the stage to enthusiastic applause, accompanied by members of the Vermont delegation and veterans from all 15 NALC regions. Sanders is the author of the Postal Service Protection Act (S. 316), legislation supported by NALC.

Sanders told delegates that the struggle to strengthen the Postal Service and to stop plans by Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe and hostile members of Congress to cut service and jobs is about much more than the mail or postal employees.

"I want you to know that the work you are doing is not only important to the jobs in the Postal Service," Sanders said, "it is vitally important to the future of the entire American economy.

"At a time when the middle class of this country is disappearing, at a time when unemployment is much too high, at a



Attendees paid tribute to Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel (pictured), former Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland, Region 3 National Business Agent Neal Tisdale and Region 5 NBA Dan Pittman at the Retiring Officers' Dinner on Thursday night.

time when most of the new jobs being created are part-time and low-wage, we are not going to destroy middle-class jobs at the Postal Service.”

Sanders then described his bill, which would give the Postal Service more flexibility to offer new products and services and free it from the mandate to pre-fund retiree health care benefits, a burden that has obscured the Postal Service’s operational profits of \$1.6 billion since October of 2012.

“There is no business in America, no corporation in America, no government agency in America that has anything close to this onerous and horrendous mandate,” he said. “We have got to get rid of that mandate once and for all.”

Sanders told delegates that we may not have the money wielded by the billionaires working to privatize the Postal Service and destroy unions, but we have strength in numbers. “We are the majority of America—we are America—and when we stand together, there’s nothing that we can’t accomplish,” the senator said.

The delegates adopted a motion to make Sanders an honorary NALC member and gave him a letter carrier cheer.

## WEBSITE & PUBLICATIONS

Rolando then invited Director of City Delivery Brian Renfroe to the mic. Renfroe showed delegates what the NALC’s redesigned website will look like when it goes live in the next few months. Delegates cheered the news that it would be fully functional on mobile devices, such as smart phones.

Rolando then presented plaques and certificates to the first-place winners of the branch publication awards:

Best News or Feature Story (tie): Dale Thaler, *The ‘B’ Mike*, Portland, OR Br. 82, and John Curtis, *The Maine Letter Carrier*, Central Maine Merged Br. 391; Promoting Unionism (tie): David Teegarden, *Viewpoint*, Kansas City, MO Br. 30, and Tony Boyd, *Timely Messenger*, San Antonio, TX Br. 421; Best Website: [nalc916.org](http://nalc916.org), Eugene,

OR Br. 916; Best Editorial or Column (tie): Warren Cooke, *The Mountaineer*, Springfield, MO Br. 203, and Ivars Lauersons, *The Voice*, San Francisco, CA Br. 214; Best Cartoon or Photo: Neal Couey, *The Beast of Burden*, Santa Barbara, CA Br. 290; General Excellence, Large Branch or State Association Publication (tie): *South Florida Letter Carrier*, South Florida Br. 1071, and *Branch 34’s CLAN*, Boston Br. 34; General Excellence, Small Branch Publication: *The Relay Box*, Eugene, OR Br. 916.

## STEPHEN DEMATTEO

Coming to the stage next was Stephen DeMatteo, the director of Union Network International (UNI) Global Union’s post and logistics division. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, UNI is a federation of national and regional trade unions, of which NALC is a member.

DeMatteo, who formerly worked at NALC Headquarters as a researcher, told delegates that postal unions and postal workers are a tough bunch. “We’re standing up against privatization and fighting back,” he said. “We know as unions and workers that there is a future for the Postal Service. Together we’ll break through, we’ll fight and we’ll win.”

## COMMITTEE ON APPEALS

Next, President Rolando asked Vice President Lew Drass, chairman of the Committee on Appeals, to come to the stage. Drass told delegates that two appeals had been presented to his committee for presentation to the convention. For the first appeal, neither the appellant nor a representative of the appellant spoke to the assembly. The Appeals Committee’s recommendation to deny the appeal was upheld by a voice vote.

For the second appeal, the appellant addressed the convention, the branch gave its rebuttal, and the appellant was permitted a minute for a response to the rebuttal. The committee’s decision to

deny part of the appeal was overturned by the convention, and the decision was remanded to the Appeals Committee for further consideration.

## SCHOLARSHIP AND HEALTH BENEFITS COMMITTEES

President Rolando then invited the members of the Scholarship Committee to come to the stage to give the committee’s report: Los Angeles Br. 24’s Jacqueline White (chairman), Detroit Br. 1’s Sandra Laemmel, and Buffalo-Western New York Br. 3’s Larry Kania.

The president next asked Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman to come to the stage and introduce the members of the Health Benefits Committee. Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100’s Marilyn Youman (chairman); Cleveland Br. 40’s Robert Murphy; and Nashville Br. 4’s Geoff Quimet presented their report to the convention.

## POSTAL BANKING

Next, President Rolando turned the convention’s attention to the subject of postal banking and invited two speakers to the stage to talk about the growing momentum to bring back a postal savings bank—“an idea that’s not only doable,” Rolando said, “it’s been done.”



President Rolando recognized Region 9 as the champs at collecting food for the annual food drive.

First to address the convention was Marc Armstrong, a postal banking advocate and founder of BankAct. “In Minneapolis, the NALC convention passed a resolution in support of postal banking,” Armstrong said. “The vision and the leadership that you showed has led to many exciting postal banking developments.”

Following Armstrong at the podium was George Collins, post and logistics’ national industry organizer for New Zealand’s Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union



George Collins



Marc Armstrong



Stephen DeMatteo



**President Rolando told the delegates about the birthday wish of Danny Nickerson, of Foxboro, Massachusetts, a 5-year-old boy battling cancer. All he wanted for his birthday was a box of birthday cards. NALC delegates came through, as shown by this picture from Southeast Mass. Merged Branch 18.**

(EPMU), that country's largest private-sector union.

"Kiwibank is a New Zealand success story," Collins said. "Through nationalistic support and great marketing, after 12 years it is now seen as one of the major banks in New Zealand. A wholly owned subsidiary of New Zealand Post, it capitalized on the post's existing retail network to provide banking services and, like last year, makes most of the New Zealand Post's profit."

## FOOD DRIVE

Coming to the stage next to talk about the Letter Carriers' Food Drive was Pam Donato, NALC Headquarters' community membership outreach coordinator. "Because of the NALC's dedication and commitment to the food drive," Donato said, "we've been able to grow this gift of food in our communities for more than 20 years in a way that has surpassed even our wildest expectations."

Donato showed the convention a video recap of this year's national food drive, which gathered 72.5 million pounds of non-perishable food. Donato also introduced Feeding America of South Jersey's Sabine Mehnert, who expressed her appreciation for the letter carriers' annual food collection effort.

President Rolando then presented this year's food drive awards: Category 11 (1-25 members): Grand Haven, MI Br. 1147, 51,450 lbs.; Category 10 (25-49 members): Beaufort, SC Br. 3262, 86,125 lbs.; Category 9 (50-99 members): Ocala, FL Br. 1103, 212,344 lbs.; Category 8 (100-199 members): Billings, MT Br. 815, 367,000 lbs.; Category 7 (200-349 members): Sun City, AZ Br. 6156, 392,999

lbs.; Category 6 (350-499 members): Fort Wayne, IN Br. 116, 542,365 lbs.; Category 5 (500-699 members): Clearwater, FL Br. 2008, 1,230,750 lbs.; Category 4 (700-999 members): Nashville, TN Br. 4, 650,643 lbs.; Category 3, (1,000-1,499 members): West Coast Florida Br. 1477, 1,670,688 lbs.; Category 2 (1,500-1,999 members): Central Florida Br. 1091, 1,485,608 lbs.; Category 1 (2,000 members or more): Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100, 1,158,725 lbs.; NALC Regional Champion (most food collected by a region): Atlanta Region 9.

## RULE 23 REPORT

Convention Rule 23, approved by the convention on Monday, states that all motions calling for expenditure of money shall be referred to the convention for approval. Two pass-the-hat motions were approved by the convention during the week, as was a motion for the national union to match the donations. National Trustees Chairman Larry Brown reported that delegates had donated a total of \$17,421. With the match, the amount rises to \$34,842. The trustees proposed distributing the collected funds evenly to former Hayward, CA Branch 1707 president Noe Herrera, who is being treated for cancer, and to the family of Mt. Clemons, MI Branch 654 member David Jorah, who recently died unexpectedly. The convention accepted the trustees' report.

## DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

President Rolando next called to the stage Canoga Park, CA Branch 4006's Jill Lemons, the chairman of the Distribu-

tion Committee. Lemons introduced the members of her committee:

Marc Ashmon, Br. 2876, Linden, NJ; Alex Criegio, Br. 84, Pittsburgh, PA; Eddie Davidson, Br. 382, Durham, NC; David Dry, Br. 258, Reading, PA; Angela Dunn, Br. 73, Atlanta; Scott Dulas, Br. 114, Duluth, MN; Rene Eberhardt, Br. 1681, Casper, WY; Kevin Flaherty, Br. 34, Boston; Al Friedman, Br. 2008, Clearwater, FL; Robert Fuentes, Br. 11, Chicago; Bryant Funches, Br. 11, Chicago; Marcos Gonzalez, Br. 989, Santa Fe; Wayne Harlow, Br. 439, Greenville, SC; Kevin Hevelone, Br. 8, Lincoln, NE; Ricky Horton, Br. 916, Eugene, OR; Darryl Johnson, Br. 24, Los Angeles; Melissa Kinworthy, Br. 209, Pekin, IL; Brian Manning, Br. 34, Boston; Alvin Matsumura, Br. 860, Honolulu; Joseph Pease, Br. 725, Southeast PA Mgd.; Vicki Piotter, Br. 916, Eugene, OR; Melody Roberts, Br. 27, Memphis, TN; Joe Rutkoski, Br. 38, New Jersey Merged; George Sarvis, Br. 137, Hudson Valley Mgd., NY; Timothy Sheehan, Br. 358, Northeastern NY; Eric Sloan, Br. 73, Atlanta; Troy Smith, Br. 30, Kansas City, MO; Tammy Sneed, Br. 62, Chattanooga, TN; Steve Strayer, Br. 205, Fargo-West Fargo, ND; Dan Szucs, Br. 38, New Jersey Mgd.; Steve Terry, Br. 14, Louisville; Trelle Thomas, Br. 129, Baton Rouge, LA; Tim Turner, Br. 533, Kokomo, IN; Darrel Vance, Br. 500, Harrisburg, PA; Charles Walls, Br. 5, Omaha, NE; and Daniel Yianakopoulos, Br. 44, New Hampshire Mgd.

## THANK YOU

Winding down the proceedings, President Rolando took a few moments of personal privilege to thank the convention delegates for their participation and attendance. He also thanked and led a letter carrier cheer for Philadelphia Branch 157's officers and members, the hosts of this year's convention.

The president also thanked NALC Headquarters staff members, giving special recognition to NALC Chief of Staff Jim Sauber. And he expressed his appreciation to his fellow members of the NALC Executive Council.

"I also want to thank my wonderful wife and children, who support me being your national president," he said.

The convention approved a motion to adjourn *sine die* at 2:08 p.m.



The delegates thanked Philadelphia Branch 157 for its work hosting the convention.