



NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE



TUESDAY, JULY 22, COVERING THE **FIRST SESSION**, MONDAY, JULY 21



REMEMBERING OUR PAST, FINDING FUTURE SUCCESS

In his keynote speech on Monday, July 21, to the more than 5,300 delegates on hand for the National Association of Letter Carriers' 69th Biennial Convention in Philadelphia, President Fredric V. Rolando highlighted the many victories letter carriers have celebrated since the 2012 convention in Minneapolis, while also laying out the challenges the union faces in the coming months and years.

With a balance of wit and gravitas—topped off by some good old-fashioned labor union passion—Rolando noted what a remarkable achievement it is within the labor movement that our union is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. He used that milestone as a springboard to review the NALC's past successes as they relate to the challenges that lie ahead—for the union and for the U.S. Postal Service.

"The task before us is a daunting one," he said, "because it involves a wide variety of fronts—political, legislative, managerial, commercial, not to mention the media and the public. But the National Association of Letter Carriers is up to the task. Our union is strong and unified, we know what's at stake, and we have the facts on our side."

'LET'S GET TO WORK'

At 10 o'clock sharp, NALC Secretary-Treasure Jane Broendel called the convention to order and invited South Florida Branch 1071 letter carrier Stephanie Bostic to sing "The Star-Spangled Ban-

ner." Following Bostic were Philadelphia Branch 157's Leo Zachwieja for the Pledge of Allegiance and, for the invocation, the Rev. Al Rossi from Philadelphia's Church of the Living Hope.

Next, Broendel called for a moment of silence to remember and honor the NALC members who have died since the 2012 convention in Minneapolis.

Philadelphia Branch 157 President Randy Zebin was then invited to the stage to welcome delegates to his city. Zebin had the honor of introducing Philadelphia Postmaster Howard Sample and Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO President Patrick Eiding.

In his brief remarks, Eiding noted that the local Teamsters and Carpenters unions have a dispute with the facility that runs the Pennsylvania Convention Center, which was why some members from both of those unions were distributing leaflets to NALC convention-goers outside the center throughout the day. Although those unions are not calling the information effort a picket line, their dispute was enough to prevent Rep. Bob Brady—a card-carrying member of the Carpenters union—from attending the convention. (NALC President Rolando later read a letter of regret from Brady.)

Returning to the podium, Broendel asked the retired national officers on stage to stand and be recognized. She then handed the mic over to NALC Region 12 National Business Agent Bill Lucini, who in turn introduced the other 14 national business agents and called on



Above: President Fredric Rolando thanked the delegates for their work in fighting to save the Postal Service and called on them to continue the effort in future struggles.

Below: Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel was recognized by the delegates for her years of leadership.



the regional administrative assistants to stand up and take a bow.

Broendel returned to the microphone and introduced the NALC's resident national officers.

As Rolando took the stage to the sounds of Ike and Tina Turner's version of "Philadelphia Freedom," the letter carrier



Clockwise from top l: Region 12 National Business Agent Bill Lucini, Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO President Patrick Eiding, Philadelphia Postmaster Howard Sample and Branch 157 President Randy Zebin.

tant strategic goals,” he said. “We won pay increases, kept our COLA clause, maintained the ban on subcontracting, won an all full-time career workforce and developed a pathway to career jobs for non-career bargaining unit letter carriers. We avoided a permanent two-tier workforce and helped position the Postal Service to become a major player in package delivery again.”

Our satisfaction at these successes, Rolando said, was tempered by the January 2013 death of what he called “our union’s animating spirit over the past 40 years,” former NALC President Vincent R. Sombrotto.

“To call Vince a giant in NALC history would be an understatement,” President Rolando said. “He was a leader like no other.”

“Nobody knew better than Vince that NALC conventions are about the future,” Rolando added. “So while we celebrate our distinguished history this week and review the events of the past two years, we should also draw inspiration for the battles ahead.”

Philadelphia marks the third consecutive convention that finds the NALC battling USPS over Saturday delivery, Rolando said. “For L’Enfant Plaza, Saturday delivery is a cost, plain and simple,” he said. “For us, Saturday delivery is the Postal Service’s competitive advantage.”

But our problems aren’t limited to L’Enfant Plaza, the president said. “The past two years, we’ve defeated several legislative efforts that would have harmed the Postal Service, us, and the millions of businesses and people who depend on a robust Postal Service,” Rolando said. “We beat back these proposals, thanks to excellent work from our legislative and political staff and you, our grassroots activists.”

There is a silver lining in the legislative process, the president said. “The Obama administration has agreed to discuss alternative proposals for postal reform in next year’s budget,” Rolando said. “Plus, the recent financial turnaround at USPS and personnel changes at the Office of Management and Budget give us hope that we can turn the administration in our favor.”

The NALC has made other progress, too. “We have built unity among the four postal unions,” Rolando said. “And with them we have reached consensus among key business groups, mailers and trade associations on a sensible industry coalition plan.”

This plan, developed with the other

postal unions as part of our recently formed alliance, became the core of a consensus plan the NALC hopes to offer Congress in the future.

The NALC faced two major challenges in the last round of collective bargaining, Rolando said: The Postal Service’s financial losses, and the agreement reached by APWU in 2011, which complicated the task of resisting USPS’ concessionary demands.

“Thanks to the tireless efforts of the NALC’s officers, staff, legal team and expert witnesses,” the president said, “the Das award in January 2013 allowed us to meet most of our strategic goals: Producing a fair contract for letter carriers and for the Postal Service.”

The Das award created a path to career employment for part-time letter carriers as well via the City Carrier Assistant (CCA) position. “The CCA workforce remains a work in progress,” Rolando said. “Looking forward, we will focus on reducing the percentage of non-career carriers, raising CCA compensation by achieving general increases and COLAs, improving their health benefit coverage and winning pension credit for CCA service.”

“But we are not waiting for the next round of bargaining to make progress for CCAs,” he said, noting that the NALC has entered into multiple memorandums of understanding with the Postal Service that have resulted in thousands of part-time flexible and CCA conversions to full-time career status.

“The stakes in organizing CCAs are high,” he said, “because CCAs, who are more numerous and who have a clear path to career status, are pivotal to the future of the NALC.”

But even as the NALC fights for long-term job security, the president said, the union remains dedicated to preserving the safety, health and well being of our active members.

“That has been the focus of the joint Safety-Service Committee,” Rolando said, “set up to deal with routine delivery outside traditional delivery hours and to combat unsafe work conditions, whether in sunshine or after dark.”

The work of the committee, he said, has resulted in major staffing improvements, hundreds of route adjustments, changes to starting times, revised transportation schedules and improved safety equipment and practices.

“At the Minneapolis Convention we began a discussion about the future of the NALC, its structure and possible reforms to become more efficient and effective,”

delegates stood and cheered.

“Not many institutions get to celebrate their 125th anniversary,” Rolando said. “That’s a remarkable achievement when one considers how much has changed since the NALC was founded in Milwaukee 125 years ago.”

“Our union has endured and thrived through tumultuous times,” the president continued. “It is a proud history of service, solidarity and progress—a history we celebrate this week.”

Rolando noted that he had to report to the Minneapolis Convention in 2012 that immense challenges complicated the NALC’s efforts to defend letter carriers at the bargaining table and in Congress—challenges such as the poor economy, congressional dysfunction, misguided USPS leadership and technological change.

“It is sobering to report that many of these obstacles remain with us today,” Rolando said.

And while the Internet technology revolution shows no sign of abating, he said, “technological change may be one area where there is cause for cautious optimism.” The Internet also is generating new business via soaring e-commerce deliveries, Rolando said.

But despite the challenges of the past two years, the president said, letter carriers can point to several positive victories as well, particularly our work with the broader labor movement during the 2012 general election to halt the surge of anti-labor political forces in the United States, and the contract the NALC secured through interest arbitration.

“Although we did not emerge unscathed from the binding arbitration process, we achieved our most impor-

Rolando said. To advance that debate, Rolando appointed a Special Review Committee composed of branch, state and national leaders to report on these matters to the Philadelphia Convention. "Our goal," he said, "is to maintain our powerful union so letter carriers can shape their destinies together.

"It's up to us to save the Postal Service, just as we have always done," he said. "We cannot count on USPS management or Board of Governors members. We have to stay strong and mobilize enough allies to force change in Congress. We need a new USPS governance structure and new management.

"Imagining and building a dynamic postal service for the 21st century is the challenge for the next two years and for the next 25 years as well," the president said.

"That's the mission we must embrace in Philadelphia," Rolando said. "Together, brothers and sisters, nobody can defeat us. Nobody can divide us, and nobody can get in our way."

"Let's get to work!" the president said to thunderous applause.

CONVENTION BUSINESS

Following his keynote address, Rolando called to the stage the chairman of the Convention Credentials Committee, Rod Holub of Manhattan, KS Branch 1018, to give the committee's preliminary report.

Holub stated that by Sunday evening, a total of 5,365 delegates had reported to the Philadelphia Convention, representing 487 branches across 49 states. He also reported that the committee had investigated a protest by a member who claimed to be an elected convention delegate omitted from his branch's delegate eligibility list. Holub reported that the committee's investigation had found the protest to be without merit.

Rolando said that the committee's figures meant that the convention had a quorum under Article 3, Section 3 of the NALC Constitution. The Credentials Committee will submit its final report later in the week.

President Rolando next invited Convention Rules Committee Chairman Dan Tegreeny to the stage. Tegreeny, a member of Central Florida Branch 1091, introduced the other members of the committee: Baton Rouge, LA Branch 129's Troy Scott and Central Iowa Merged Branch 352's Stephanie Stewart.

By acclamation, the convention voted to accept the convention rules *en bloc*.

President Rolando then introduced his appointee as election commissioner and chairman of the Board of Tellers, Joe DeRossi of Brooklyn, NY Branch 41, who

The following resolutions were approved by the delegates at the National Convention. National agreement resolutions will now be part of the official position of the NALC in future contract negotiations.

Legislative Resolutions:

- NALC will seek to subject the conduct of Independent Medical Examiners to the same review and oversight as injured employees suspected and investigated for injury compensation fraud.
- NALC will seek to allow all non-career employees who become career employees

to make deposits for service time with the Postal Service and/or another federal government agency.

National Agreement Resolutions:

- Revise Article 8.5.G to include PTFs and non-career employees.
- Provide a Sunday premium to CCAs when they work.
- Restore former language in Article 9 concerning COLA pay scales.
- Return the wage differential of new and senior employees to levels prior to the Das award.

listed the Board's members:

Helen Amill, Branch 36, New York, NY; David Barbuzzi, Branch 25, Mass. NE Merged; Bill Bauder, Branch 442, Spokane, WA; James Beach, Branch 644, Muscatine, IA; Steve Bilzing, Branch 155, Belleville, IL; Kevin Boyer, Branch 763, Columbia, MO; Scott Correll, Branch 115, Wilkes-Barre, PA; Terry Davis, Branch 1358, Tulsa, OK; Tonya Detrick, Branch 443, Hagerstown, MD; Marcus Garcia, Branch 24, Los Angeles, CA; Jim Gleason, Branch 920, Bux-Mont, PA; Richard Griffin, Branch 2502, Las Vegas, NV; Mike Harazmus, Branch 46, Western Massachusetts; Bob Henning, Branch 53, Northeast Florida; Ernest Knight, Branch 1071, South Florida; Doug Lape, Branch 43, Cincinnati, OH; Jim Lostumbo, Branch 134, Syracuse, NY; Wayne Martin, Branch 47, Denver, CO; Vincent Mase, Branch 19, New Haven, CT; Kathy McGarrity, Branch 2805, New Braunfels, TX; Mark McGrady, Branch 38, New Jersey Merged; Timothy McKay, Branch 531, Charleston, WV; David Miller, Branch 458, Oklahoma City, OK; Marie Montano, Branch 504, Albuquerque, NM; John Paige, Branch 927, Pocatello, ID; Margaret Parker, Branch 219, Aurora, IL; Francisco Pecunia-Vega, Branch 1128, Fayetteville, NC; Darla Peterson, Branch 491, Sioux Falls, SD; Jeffrey Rainey, Branch 30, Kansas City, MO; Carlos Rodriguez, Branch 1456, Brownsville, TX; Paul Roznowski, Branch 3126, Royal Oak, MI; Pery Sprachmann, Branch 196, Elyria, OH; Paul Toms, Branch 39, Indianapolis, IN; Chris Verville, Branch 4, Nashville, TN; Andrew Weiner, Branch 562, Jamaica, NY and Timothy Whelan, Branch 157, Philadelphia, PA.

The delegates then voted to approve *en bloc* all proposed resolutions that had been recommended for approval by the Executive Council. They then debated some of the resolutions recommended for disapproval. Two resolutions were approved after the sponsors agreed to make changes recommended by the Executive Council.

The delegates voted to uphold the Executive Council's disapproval of a resolution that would have called for limiting the percentage of CCAs as a proportion of the total carrier workforce at the installation level rather than the district level. Following a division, delegates upheld the Executive Council's disapproval of a resolution that would have called for NALC to negotiate for different pay levels in different parts of the country. Several other resolutions were withdrawn.

Rolando then turned the microphone over to President Emeritus William H. Young, who noted the NALC's work

protecting the Postal Service and letter carriers' jobs.

"I congratulate all the members of this great union," Young said.

Rolando then read a letter from President Emeritus

James H. Rademacher. The former president expressed his regret that health problems kept him from attending the convention.

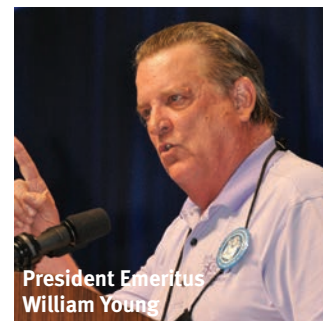
The delegates later viewed an inspirational video about Rademacher's vital role in the NALC's history, including negotiating with the Nixon administration for legislation that created the modern Postal Service and gave letter carriers collective-bargaining rights.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) then greeted the delegates in a video message. Warren noted that she is a co-sponsor of the Postal Service Protection Act (S. 316), legislation supported by NALC that would take actions to put the Postal Service on a footing to thrive and compete, including ending the mandate to pre-fund future retiree health care benefits and preserving six-day delivery. Warren also called for expanding the Postal Service's role in the economy by allowing access to financial transaction services for rural, low-income and other people who have been shut out of the banking system.

"We need a strong Postal Service to strengthen and grow our economy," she said. "The Postal Service is a critical part of our community, and hard-working letter carriers are the key to its success."

The delegates returned the favor of Warren's video by recording a letter carrier cheer to be delivered to her.

Executive Vice President Timothy C. O'Malley then presented awards to carriers who, since the last convention, have gen-



erated leads of more than \$1 million through the Customer Connect program.

Next, Rolando introduced Richard Nash, eBay's head of U.S., Canada and Latin America government affairs; eBay is one of the Postal Service's largest parcel shipping customers. A quarter of all parcels handled by USPS, Nash said, are generated by eBay, bringing in \$2.2 billion in postage paid.

Nash said the Postal Service is essential to his company's success, and eBay is a committed partner in NALC's efforts to protect the Postal Service. "For every individual or small business with something to sell on eBay, someone needs to pick up the package," he said, "and someone needs to deliver it to the home or business of the buyer. And that someone is you.

"It goes without saying that eBay especially loves the six-day delivery schedule," Nash said.

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel then presented her secretary-treasurer's report and financial report to the delegates, noting the opportunities and challenges that the



eBay's
Richard Nash



Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
Nicole Rhine



Executive Vice President
Timothy O'Malley



Vice President
Lew Drass

influx of CCAs has brought to the union. Membership levels, she said, have halted their rapid decline of the last decade—the number of active members remains steady at about 180,000, and retired members at about 89,000. Taking full advantage of the Postal Service's hiring trend will require a focus on organizing, since NALC membership among CCAs lags behind career carriers.

Broendel's report was poignant because it was her last—she will retire at the end of her term in December. She has served as national secretary-treasurer since 2002, after becoming the NALC's first female national officer when she was sworn in as assistant secretary-treasurer in 1998.

"I say thank you, and goodbye, to all of you for all the wonderful years you have allowed me to serve as your national secretary-treasurer," Broendel said. "It's certainly been an honor and a pleasure." The delegates responded with extended standing applause. Rolando then led delegates in a letter carrier cheer for Broendel.

Rolando next introduced the chairman of the Committee on the President's

Biennial Report, Ken Christy of Aurora, IL Branch 219. Christy introduced committee members Kimberly Arnhold of Pasadena, TX Branch 3867 and Joe Hschen of West Coast Florida Branch 1477. A motion to accept the biennial report

was approved.

Delegates watched a video, "Remembering Vince," in which many NALC activists and Sombrotto family members shared their memories hero of the 1970 postal strike, Vincent Sombrotto, who passed away last year. The video was an expanded version of the one shown at a celebration of the former president's life that followed the memorial service held in New York in January.

The delegates then observed a moment of silence as Rolando read the names of nine carriers killed in the line of duty since the 2012 convention. Their names will be added to the memorial at NALC Headquarters honoring carriers lost on the job:

Atzelia Borges, San Juan, PR Branch 869; John A. Watzlawick, Independence, MO Branch 30; Stephen K. Bishop, Phoenix, AZ Branch 576; Robert R. Rochester, Wilmington, DE Branch 191; Kenneth C. Carrano, Brick Town, NJ Branch 5420; Juan C. Riestra, West Palm Beach, FL Branch 1690; Alan R. Nobile, Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000; Leo M. Brandt, Minneapolis, MN Branch 9 and Leo R. Sucharski, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3.

Rolando recessed the convention at 3:20 p.m.

NALC AUXILIARY



MONDAY, JULY 21

Sounds of the Cleveland letter carrier band greeted Auxiliary delegates at the opening of the 54th Biennial Convention.

Colors were presented by Jim Kirby (Auxiliary 465, retired carrier, Kenosha, WI Branch 574 and Marine Corps veteran) and Mike Rasmussen (Auxiliary 430, retired carrier, Racine, WI Branch 436 and Navy Vietnam veteran). Mike Zagaros of Minneapolis, MN Branch 9 sang the National Anthem and led the Pledge of Allegiance. National Auxiliary Treasurer Pam Fore (Auxiliary 2621, Lakeland, FL) presented a Moment of Grace, followed by the Collect.

Sue O'Malley, wife of NALC Executive Vice President Tim O'Malley, welcomed delegates and guests to Philadelphia and thanked all Auxiliary members for their active support. She said that support goes a long way in allowing our carriers to become active in the union, which serves to better the lives of all carriers and families. President Linda Kirby presented O'Malley a "Proud to be a Friend of the Auxiliary" pin.

President Kirby introduced Past National Officer Edie Pottenger (Auxiliary 444, Denver, CO) and Patsy Mester (Auxiliary 21, Springfield, IL). First time delegates introduced themselves.

President Kirby made committee assignments. Credentials Chair George Anna Myers (national assistant secretary, Auxiliary 4, Kansas City, MO) and Cynthia Martinez (Auxiliary 377, Phoenix, AZ) were introduced and gave the preliminary credentials report of 31 auxiliaries represented from 24 states, five national officers, six state vice presidents, eight state presidents, 60 delegates and 62 voting delegates.

National Secretary Marie Rasmussen gave a brief presentation on the theme for the convention, "This is What Democracy Looks Like," along with how this phrase became a rallying cry during the 2011 uprising in Wisconsin, and played various audio interviews from that period.

Rules Committee Chair Crystal Bragg (Auxiliary 153, Decatur, IL) and commit-

tee member Sarah Scott (Auxiliary 260, Salem, OR) presented the rules, which were approved as presented. President Kirby thanked them.

The keynote speaker for the opening session was Jody Spencer of Racine, WI Branch 436 and a recent graduate of the NALC Leadership Academy. Spencer gave an interesting and informative presentation on the history of the NALC and the pivotal role the Auxiliary has played throughout history. A key take-away point was when mail delivery went from twice a day to once a day. Said Spencer, "Services lost are never regained," and that this needs to be a reminder as we face the legislative battles we have now.

Bylaws Chair Patsy Mester (Auxiliary 21, Springfield, IL) and committee member Nancy Southern (Auxiliary 2621, Lakeland, FL) introduced three bylaw changes. All passed.

The meeting was recessed at 12:53. Committees then met from 1:00 to 2:00.

—M. Marie Rasmussen, NALCA Secretary