The third day of Convention Week saw delegates come together to stand up against conservatives in Washington who strive to destroy the middle class, stand shoulder to shoulder with postal and other labor unions, and stand together to make sure we all stay safe on and off our jobs. In Philadelphia, it was truly a day for brotherly love.

TELLING LABOR’S STORY

NALC President Fredric Rolando called the convention to order at 10. Performing “The Star-Spangled Banner” to get the day started was Seattle Branch 79’s Austin Cooper. Southeast Pennsylvania Merged Branch 725 President Jim McCullough led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an invocation from Fr. Michael Reilly, pastor of South Philadelphia’s St. Richard of Chichester Roman Catholic Church.

The day’s first speaker was Ed Schultz, host of “The Ed Show” on the MSNBC cable TV network as well as host of his eponymous nationally syndicated radio show. “There is no greater defender of unions and no stronger warrior for workers anywhere in the media than Ed Schultz,” President Rolando said.

Greeted by a standing ovation from the delegates, Schultz described himself as a friend and advocate for letter carriers. “I’m for the workers,” Schultz said. “I know the righties are not, and that’s just the way the world is turning right now.”

But change is coming, he said. “The politicians who thought they had a better way for America? They’re all losing. And they might defeat us individually, but they will never do that collectively.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Rolando shifted gears to discuss what he called “a very important topic for letter carriers and the NALC: Protecting the health and safety of letter carriers.”

“You have my commitment that I will be there for you,” he said to cheers and applause. “We will tell the story. We will make the change. And we will save the Postal Service and restore it to where it’s got to be.”

Before Schultz left the stage, President Rolando led an enthusiastic letter carrier cheer for him. Later, delegates approved a motion from the floor to make Schultz an honorary member of the NALC.
threats to carriers that have been on the rise in recent years.”

Describing suicide as a heart-breaking problem, the president noted that although suicide does not arise primarily or exclusively from workplace pressures, “I think we need to talk about this problem and figure out what we can do to help.”

The second health and safety issue is an “unacceptable increase” in park point accidents, the president said. These are where carriers are struck by cars or trucks while they work the mail from the back of their postal vehicles.

He then invited NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel Peralta to come to the stage to drive home the threat of unsafe park points.

Peralta noted that there had been a workshop that morning on this very topic. “But we feel this issue is so important that we wanted to come before the whole convention to raise the issue,” he said.

Delegates gave the seven injured carriers in front of the stage a standing ovation and a letter carrier cheer.

Returning to the podium, President Rolando said letter carriers should ask themselves two questions each day: How do I keep myself out of harm’s way? And am I doing enough to protect the safety of letter carriers in my station?

“As union activists, we must work toward making a safer work environment every day,” the president said.

Delegates called for several moments of silence to honor fallen carriers.

NOMINATIONS

Shortly before noon, President Rolando turned to the next order of business, as required by the NALC Constitution: calling for nominations for national office. President Rolando ceded the chair to Executive Vice President Timothy O’Malley, since the first nomination was for the office of president. O’Malley called for nominations, and two were forthcoming from the floor—for Fredric V. Rolando of Sarasota, FL Branch 2148, and for David Noble of Washington, DC Branch 162.

Returning to the microphone, President Rolando sought nominations for all remaining offices, which were offered from the floor as follows (uncontested nominees were elected by consent; contested nominees are listed in alphabetical order):

Executive Vice President (contested)
—Catherine Jones, Minneapolis Br. 9
—Timothy C. O’Malley, Philadelphia Br. 157

Vice President (contested)
—Deirdre Beal, South Florida Br. 1071
—Lew Drass, Huntsville, AL Br. 462

Secretary-Treasurer
—Nicole Rhine, Lincoln, NE Br. 8
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer (contested)
—Sharella Spikes, South Florida Br. 1071
—Judy Willoughby, Tallahassee Br. 1172

Director of City Delivery
—Brian Renfroe, Hattiesburg, MS Br. 938

Director, Safety & Health (contested)
—Travis Lober, Arizona Merged Br. 1902
—Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Garden Grove Br. 1100

Director of Life Insurance
—Myra Warren, Dallas Br. 32

Director Health Benefit Plan
—Brian Hellman, New York City Br. 36

Director, Retired Members (contested)
—Ken Ring, Minneapolis Br. 9
—Ron Watson, Covallis, OR Br. 1274

National Trustees (three positions; contested)
—Erica Bloom, South Florida Br. 1071
—Lawrence D. Brown Jr., Los Angeles Br. 24
—William Haller, St. Petersburg, Fl. Br. 1477
—Brett Israel, Fort Lauderdale, Fl. Br. 2550
—Mike Gill, South Florida Br. 1071

Region 1 NBA
—Christopher Jackson, Garden Grove Br. 1100

Region 2 NBA
—Paul L. Price, Portland, OR Br. 82

Region 3 NBA (contested)
—Michael Caref, Chicago Br. 11
—Tony Hutson, Galesburg, IL Br. 88

Region 4 NBA
—Roger Bledsoe, Oklahoma City Br. 458

Region 5 NBA
—Mike Birkett, Oklahoma Br. 257

Region 6 NBA (contested)
—Patrick C. Carroll, South Macomb, MI Br. 4374
—Gary Smith, Grand Rapids Br. 56

Region 7 NBA
—Chris Wittenburg, St. Paul Br. 28

Region 8 NBA
—Peter S. Moss, Gulf Coast Mgd., MS Br. 1374

Region 9 NBA
—Kenneth Gibbs, Brunswick, GA Br. 313

Region 10 NBA (contested)
—Kathy Baldwin, Beaumont, TX Br. 842
—David Pratt, Albuquerque, NM Br. 504

Region 11 NBA
—Dan Toth, Lorain, OH Br. 583

Region 12 NBA
—William J. Lucini, Philadelphia Br. 157

Region 13 NBA
—Timothy W. Dowdy, Virginia Beach, VA Br. 2819

Director of City Delivery Brian Renfroe celebrates Nicole Rhine’s election as the next secretary-Treasurer.
The following national agreement resolutions were approved by the delegates at the National Convention. They will now be part of the official position of the NALC in future contract negotiations.

- include CCAs in Article 10 and allow CCAs to carry over the maximum amount of leave.
- add significant other in the definition of a family member for Bereavement Leave.
- include CCAs as eligible employees to receive military pay.
- earn sick leave while on military duty.
- CCAs receive holiday scheduling premium.
- eliminate Article 12.1.
- allow for mutual exchanges between CCAs.

- negotiate a higher employer contribution to the cost of premiums for CCAs who want to participate in any health plan beyond self only.
- CCAs receive a retirement account with matching contributions from the Postal Service.
- apply Article 25 to CCAs.
- CCAs receive their yearly uniform allotment on the same method as career carriers.
- provide postal vehicles for CCAs traveling on the clock from station to station.
- discontinue the Postal Service’s use of Managed Service Points.
- a 204b must be working in their own installation in order for provisions in Article 41.1 to apply.

E-ACTIVIST NETWORK

Rolando then introduced Stephen Sombrotto, son of former NALC President Vincent Sombrotto, who passed away last year. Stephen Sombrotto shared memories of his father and his family’s experiences with the NALC. “We’ve always looked at NALC members as our stepbrothers and stepsisters,” he said. “The letter carriers will always be attached to our lives and our families.”

The delegates gave Sombrotto a letter carrier cheer.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Rolando handed the microphone to Credentials Committee Chairman Rod Holub of Manhattan, KS Branch 1018, who introduced the members of the committee: Rick Abbarno of West Palm Beach, FL Branch 1690; Craig Bishop of Sacramento, CA Branch 133; Marie Didier of Elmhurst, IL Branch 825; John Dyce of Youngstown, OH Branch 385; Ethel Ford of Houston Branch 283; Robbie Gardiner of Fort Wayne, IN Branch 116; Sonny Guadalupe of New York City Branch 36; Christine Guziewski of Brick Town, NJ Branch 5420; Kyle Inosencio of Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56; Cindy Kirby of Denver Branch 47; Terry Long of Redwood Falls, MN Branch 2013; John Oross of Dayton, OH Branch 182; Lynne Pendleton of Central Florida Branch 1091; Tony Percoco of Scotch Plains, NJ Branch 4102; Grace Perry of South Florida Branch 1071; Brian Simmons of Southeast Massachusetts Merged Branch 18; Amy Steffens of Fargo-West Fargo, ND Branch 205; Mike Wahlquist of Salt Lake City Branch 111; Greg White of Gulf Coast Mississippi Branch 1374 and Delano Wilson of Silver Spring, MD Branch 2611.

Holub gave the committee’s final report, stating that 6,276 delegates representing 588 branches from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were in attendance, along with 72 at-large delegates and 28 national officers.

E-ACTIVIST NETWORK

Rolando then gave awards for e-Activist Network participation. The winners were: Branch with the highest percentage of e-Activists with 50 to 99 members—Pearl City, HI Branch 4682, 85 percent; branch with the highest participation, 100 to 499 members—Eugene, OR Branch 916, 72 percent; branch with the highest participation, 500 to 999 members—Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126, 60 percent; branch with the highest participation, 1,000 to 1,999 members—Kansas City, MO Branch 30, 33 percent; branch with the highest participation, 2,000 to 3,999 members—Philadelphia Branch 157, 28 percent; branch with the highest participation, 4,000 or more members—South Florida Branch 1071, 26 percent; state with the highest participation—Alaska State Association, 42 percent; and region with the highest participation—Region 5 (Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas), 27 percent.

MARK DIMONDSTEIN

The delegates viewed a videotaped greeting from American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein, who thanked letter carriers for their participation in the Postal Union Alliance, the four postal unions that are working in unison to protect the Postal Service and postal jobs, including the struggle to save six-day delivery and stop closure of postal facilities.

“The Postal Union Alliance is a vital step in the process of building a grand alliance with the people of this country in defense of the public’s Postal Service, in defense of their national treasure,” he said.

As an expression of solidarity, Rolando announced that following the end of the
day’s session, delegates would rally against the arrangement between the Postal Service and Staples that outsources postal clerk jobs. At the “Stop Staples” rally, letter carriers signed a petition that was delivered to a Philadelphia Staples store; a video of the events was sent to the APWU convention being held this week in Chicago.

HISTORY LESSONS

The delegates then enjoyed a film made from restored color footage taken at the NALC’s 32nd biennial convention held in Milwaukee in 1939, the year NALC turned 50.

Rolando next welcomed former letter carrier Phil Rubio, associate professor of history at North Carolina A&T University, to the mic. Rubio described in his book, There’s Always Work at the Post Office, how postal jobs have offered upward mobility to African Americans. Rubio has asked convention delegates who participated in the strike of 1970 to provide him with their recollections.

Next, Rolando welcomed author and playwright Calvin Ramsey to the podium. Ramsey explained the historical framework of his children’s book, _Ruth and the Green Book_, which tells the almost forgotten story of the _Green Book_, published by letter carrier Victor Green before the civil rights era, which listed places where traveling African-Americans could find places to eat, sleep, use restrooms or get medical care without facing discrimination. The delegates thanked both Rubio and Ramsey with letter carrier cheers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Rolando then invited the Board of Trustees to the microphone. Trustees Chairman Lawrence D. Brown Jr. of Los Angeles Branch 24, assisted by trustees Randall Keller of Northeast Massachusetts Merged Branch 25 and Michael Gill of South Florida Branch 1071, gave the trustees’ report.

Next, Rolando introduced the members of the Band Committee—Chairman Charles Sexton of St. Louis Branch 343 and Ernest Phillips of Cleveland Branch 40—who gave their committee’s report.

Rolando recessed the convention at 3:14 p.m.

Correction: Yesterday’s Chronicle gave the wrong winner of the award for the branch with 1,000 or more members that had the highest rate of organization of CCAs. The winner was Hartford, CT Branch 86.