

NALC CONVENTION

CHRONICLE



COVERING THE FIFTH SESSION: FRIDAY, AUG. 19, 2016



LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

During their final general session, the delegates to NALC's 70th Biennial National Convention looked back at the work they had accomplished throughout the week, and set forth, back to their stations, branches and regions, to continue to work toward the goals they have set for themselves. They welcomed new friends to the fold, and they bid a bittersweet farewell to a longtime leader who's beginning a new chapter in his life's story.

Delegates heard from two longtime allies in the legislative arena, as well as from many rank-and-file delegates, eager to share their struggles and triumphs. Awards were given for legislative and political activism, and the supreme body of our union finished with the hardest work of all—deciding on appeals made directly by brother and sister letter carriers.

The delegates left the convention hall recharged, fully prepared to face the many challenges that lie ahead. The closing day of the convention began at 8 a.m.—two hours earlier than the other business days this week, in an effort to get as much business accomplished by noon to accommodate the many delegates with cross-country flights.

FINAL SESSION

NALC President Fredric Rolando called the gathering to order and invited to the stage Stephanie Bostic of South Florida Branch 1071 to sing the national anthem. Los Angeles Branch 24 Executive Vice President Steve Abasta led delegates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the invocation by the Rev. Ann Hayman of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles.

After a few announcements, the president opened the floor to some comments from the microphones and then turned to regular business.

UNIFORM AND MBA COMMITTEES

NALC Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren introduced Uniform Committee Chairman Stafford Price Jr. of Chicago Br. 11, who in turn introduced committee member Greg Klopfer of Jamaica, NY Br. 562 and acknowledged another committee member who could not attend the convention: Gina Mendoza-Teick of Fort Worth, TX Br. 226. Price delivered the committee's report, saying that recent tests of new uniform items had yielded mostly positive reviews from testers.

President Rolando spoke to delegates about preserving door-to-door delivery service at a rally before the general session began.

Warren then introduced the chairman of the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) committee, Zulma Betancourt of West Coast Florida Br. 1477, who introduced committee members Patrick Johnson of Milwaukee Br. 2 and William Lodek of Reading, PA Br. 258. The committee members delivered its report, saying that the MBA is growing and continues to have a strong financial base.

DANCING ON TO DETROIT

The delegates viewed a video recap of the week's events, and then members of Detroit Br. 1, led by Branch President Sandra Laemmel, danced through the hall and onto the stage to welcome letter carriers to Detroit, the site of the 71st Biennial Convention in 2018. Delegates viewed a video about attractions in the Motor City.

"Detroit is a labor town," Laemmel said, "where the middle class was born."

AFL-CIO DELEGATES

Board of Tellers Chairman Joe DeRossi of Brooklyn Br. 41 then announced the

results of the election of delegates to the AFL-CIO convention. The top seven vote winners were elected:

- Denise Brooks, Medford, OR Br. 1433 —9,745
- Anita Guzik, Los Angeles Br. 24 —9,707
- Charles Heege, New York City Br. 36 —9,420
- Lloyd Doucet, New Orleans Br. 124 —9,084
- Stephen Hanna, York, PA Br. 509 —9,073
- Elise Foster, Chicago Br. 11—8,922
- Ingrid Armada, Providence, RI Br. 15 —8,569
- David Hyman, Tri-Valley, CA Br. 2902 —1,242
- Jeffrey Cushner, Wilmington, DE Br. 191—1,056
- Michael Carnahan, Tucson, AZ Br. 704—743
- Ronney Harper, Atlanta Br. 73—687
- Everett Wyllie, Waco, TX Br. 404 —675
- Jeffrey Parr, Santa Rosa, CA Br. 183 —631
- James “Fred” Brown, Central Florida Br. 1091—606
- Kevin Byrne, West Palm Beach, FL Br. 1690—568
- Ernestine Hernandez, Tri-Valley, CA Br. 2902—568
- Derrick Jones, Tallahassee, FL Br. 1172—283

REP. MAXINE WATERS



President Rolando introduced Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), who addressed the convention.

Waters told the delegates to hold strong in their advocacy efforts to reject cuts to mail

service, and to move the Postal Service forward by supporting efforts in Congress to give USPS greater flexibility and expand the services it provides to the public.

“Let’s be creative,” she said. “Let’s get our constituents advocating for the use of the Postal Service in creative ways.”

Waters pledged to support letter carriers and their efforts to preserve middle-class jobs and the Postal Service’s role in the economy. “I will continue to fight on behalf of all the families here today,” she said.

HBP AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEES

NALC Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman introduced Health Benefit Plan Committee Chairman Marilyn Youman of Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100, who in turn introduced committee members Robert Murphy of Cleveland Br. 40 and Tom Nelson of New York City Br. 36. The committee delivered its report, saying that 7,314 new members in the last year had boosted total enrollment in the NALC Health Benefit Plan to 236,445.

Rolando introduced the Scholarship Committee: Chairman Jacqueline White, Los Angeles Br. 24; Sandra Laemmel, Detroit Br. 1; and Larry Kania, Buffalo-Western New York Br. 3. The committee delivered its report and read letters from grateful scholarship recipients.

VIDEOS OF RECOVERY AND GREETINGS

President Rolando asked the delegates to watch the final video in the five-part series that was created for the convention. This one, titled “Letter Carriers: Delivering Recovery,” was about how carriers tend to be the first public employees back on the job following a natural disaster, providing residents with a measure of hope that things will eventually return to normal. The video focused specifically on letter carriers’ role in recovery efforts in the Gulf of Mexico coastal region following Hurricane Katrina and in the New Jersey and New York region after Hurricane Sandy.

Following the video, Rolando turned delegates toward politics. “This week, we’ve been talking a lot about the importance of the November elections,” he said. “The thing we can all

directly influence is who serves as the next president of the United States.”

For letter carriers, he said, the best choice for that office is Hillary Clinton, noting that “her history with us goes back more than 20 years:”

- Clinton invited NALC President Vincent Sombrotto to the White House in 1993 to discuss health care.
- As a senator, Clinton was among the first to sponsor a bill to ban the Postal Service’s practice of contracting out letter carrier jobs to low-wage, non-union workers.
- In 2009, she helped mobilize support for a Senate bill supporting the right of employees to form unions.
- This summer, she and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) came together to support a postal plank in the Democratic National Committee’s platform.

Clinton could not join us for the convention in person, the president said: “We’re meeting in a state that’s not exactly in play this fall.”

Instead, Clinton had prepared for delegates a video greeting, which Rolando invited delegates to watch.

“I am very honored to have your endorsement,” Clinton said in the video. “You’re a big reason most Americans rank the Postal Service the most trusted government agency.”

Clinton noted how letter carriers have strengthened the fight for unions and the middle class. “When I’m president, you’ll always have a champion in the White House,” she said. “I honestly don’t know what our country would do without you.”

E-ACTIVIST AWARDS

Rolando next presented awards for participation in NALC’s e-Activist Network:

- Medford, OR Branch 1433: Highest percentage of e-Activists among





Members from Detroit Branch 1 encouraged delegates to get excited for the next national convention to be held there in 2018.

branches with 250 or fewer members (82 percent)

- Eugene, OR Branch 916: Highest percentage of e-Activists among branches with 251 to 999 members (76 percent)
- Portland, OR Branch 92: Highest percentage of e-Activists among branches with 1,000 members or more (54 percent)
- Alaska State Association: Highest percentage of e-Activists among state associations with fewer than 2,000 members (50 percent)
- Oregon State Association: Highest percentage of e-Activists among state associations with 2,000 to 7,499 members (59 percent)
- New Jersey State Association: Highest percentage of e-Activists among state associations with 7,500 members or more (37 percent)
- Region 5: Highest percentage of e-Activists among regions with fewer than 15,000 members (34 percent)
- Region 6: Highest percentage of e-Activists among regions with 15,000 to 19,999 members (26 percent)
- Region 9: Highest percentage of e-Activists among regions with 20,000 members or more (25 percent)

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND AWARDS

The president then handed out awards for the branches and the state association that have the highest per capita contribution rate, and the highest per capita contribution, to the Letter Carrier Political Fund:

- Branches under 250 members—Newport, RI Branch 57: 91 percent participate, \$172 per capita
- Branches with 250 to 999 members—Aurora, IL Branch 219: 45 percent participate, \$91 per capita
- Branches with 1,000 or more members—Austin, TX Branch 181: 34 percent participate, \$70 per capita
- State association: Hawaii—33 percent participate, \$76 per capita

APPEALS

NALC Vice President Lew Drass, chairman of the Committee on Appeals, told delegates that four appeals had been presented to his committee for presentation to the convention. The members presented their appeals directly to the convention, the highest governing body in the union. The convention upheld the committee's decisions to deny appeals in three of the four cases. It overturned the committee's decision in the final case, and the committee will now advise the branch on how it should proceed.

SOLIDARITY AND SYMPATHY

On Wednesday, a collection was taken for a retired Chicago Branch 11 member whose son was killed, and on Thursday, delegates approved a motion to devote part of that collection to help a letter carrier whose two sons have a rare, terminal genetic disorder. NALC Board of Trustees Chairman Larry Brown announced that \$9,587 had been collected on Wednesday, that the amount would be matched by NALC Headquarters (for a new total of \$19,174), and that the two recipients would each receive a 50-percent share of that new total.

President Rolando returned to the microphone and noted that the 30th anniversary of the Edmonds, OK, postal shooting tragedy is on Saturday, Aug. 20. Fourteen people were killed that day; that incident, and a similar one in Royal Oak, MI, in 1991, were the main forces behind the adoption of the landmark Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace in 1992. The president called for a moment of silence to honor the memory of those who had died.

DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

The president then called to the stage for a report the members of the Distribution Committee: Jill Lemons,

Br. 4006, Canoga Park, CA (chairman); Mike Alexander, Br. 124, New Orleans; Mark Ashmon, Br. 2876, Linden, NJ; Cathy Bodnar, Br. 580, Hammond, IN; Linda Boroughs, Br. 132, Dallas; Paul Boulanger, Br. 44, New Hampshire Mgd.; Tony Bultinck, Br. 292, Rock



Members had the opportunity to voice their appeals of branch decisions to the national convention.

Island, IL; Homer Christian, Br. 359, Huntington, WV; Eddie Davidson Jr., Br. 382, Durham, NC; Holly Dexter, Br. 11, Chicago; Angela Dunn, Br. 73, Atlanta; Rene Eberhardt, Br. 1681, Casper, WY; Albert Friedman, Br. 2008, Clearwater, FL; Lorita Frost, Br. 24, Los Angeles; Anthony Gambone, Br. 542, Norristown, PA; Mark Godbee, Br. 5050, Ballwin, MO; Charles Goushian, Br. 540, Camden, NJ Mgd.; Michael Hamilton, Br. 3902, Charleston, SC; Ricky Horton, Br. 916, Eugene, OR; Eddie Lofland, Br. 69, Sioux City, IA; Brian Manning, Br. 34, Boston; Alvin Matsumura, Br. 860, Honolulu; Ronald Oree, Br. 294, Flushing, NY; Joseph Otero, Br. 38, New Jersey Mgd.; Sharon Patterson, Br. 1624, Crown Point, IN; Vicki Plotter, Br. 916, Eugene, OR; Michael Powles,



Timothy O'Malley thanked the delegates and bid them farewell in his last act as executive vice president of the union.

Br. 24, Los Angeles; Christopher Verville, Br. 4, Nashville, TN; Warren Wehmas, Br. 2942, Hopkins, MN; Jerry Wyatt, Br. 595, Danville, VA.

Following a few final announcements from NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, Rolando returned to the microphone to thank Los Angeles Branch 24 for its work in putting together a successful national convention. The president also thanked

Br. 22, New Castle, PA; Jesse Reed, Br. 11, Chicago; Melody Roberts, Br. 27, Memphis, TN; Timothy Sheehan, Br. 358, Northeastern NY; Eric Sloan, Br. 73, Atlanta; Christine Strasser, Br. 38, New Jersey Mgd.; Kelly Strottman, Br. 352, Central Iowa Mgd.; Maria Tarango;

staff members from NALC Headquarters and from the regional offices for their work, noting that many performed their tasks well behind the scenes.

Rolando took a few final comments from the floor microphones, including the motion to adjourn the convention. Before he called for a vote on that motion, he asked Timothy C. O'Malley—NALC's executive vice president who announced on Monday that he was retiring at the end of the convention—to say a few final words. A clearly emotional O'Malley, with his wife at his side, thanked delegates and bid them farewell.

Then, with the voiced approval of the delegates, President Rolando adjourned the convention *sine die* shortly before noon.

LOTS TO LEARN

With nearly 40 workshop sessions covering a wide range of topics from community service to planning retirement, charity work to handling workers' compensation issues, delegates had many opportunities to learn more about how to further the membership's goals and interests.

Classes were held on Monday afternoon and at the beginning and end of each day Tuesday through Thursday. Many classes attracted capacity crowds, and several incorporated humor to keep attendees entertained as they learned—such as a “Jeopardy!”-style NALC history challenge.

There were workshops specially targeting branch officers' responsibilities, such as managing branch finances, training trustees, handling dues and learning NALC's constitution. Other classes focused on workroom floor concerns, mobilizing members and communicating the union's message.

Specialized classes focused on letter carriers' safety and health, on dignity and respect in the workplace, on the rights and benefits of city carrier assistants, and on member benefits such as the Mutual Benefit Association, the NALC Health Benefit Plan and the Thrift Savings Plan.

Several opportunities were made available for delegates to learn more about the union's history through presentations of such videos as “The Strike at 40,” the 2010 video commemorating the Great Postal Strike of 1970. And in one workshop, many members received a first up-close look at version 1.0 of the NALC Member App for smartphones.

Several delegates took to the floor of the convention to praise the workshops, vowing to return to their branches with their new-found skills and to help train and inform the local members who didn't get the chance to attend the Los Angeles Convention.

