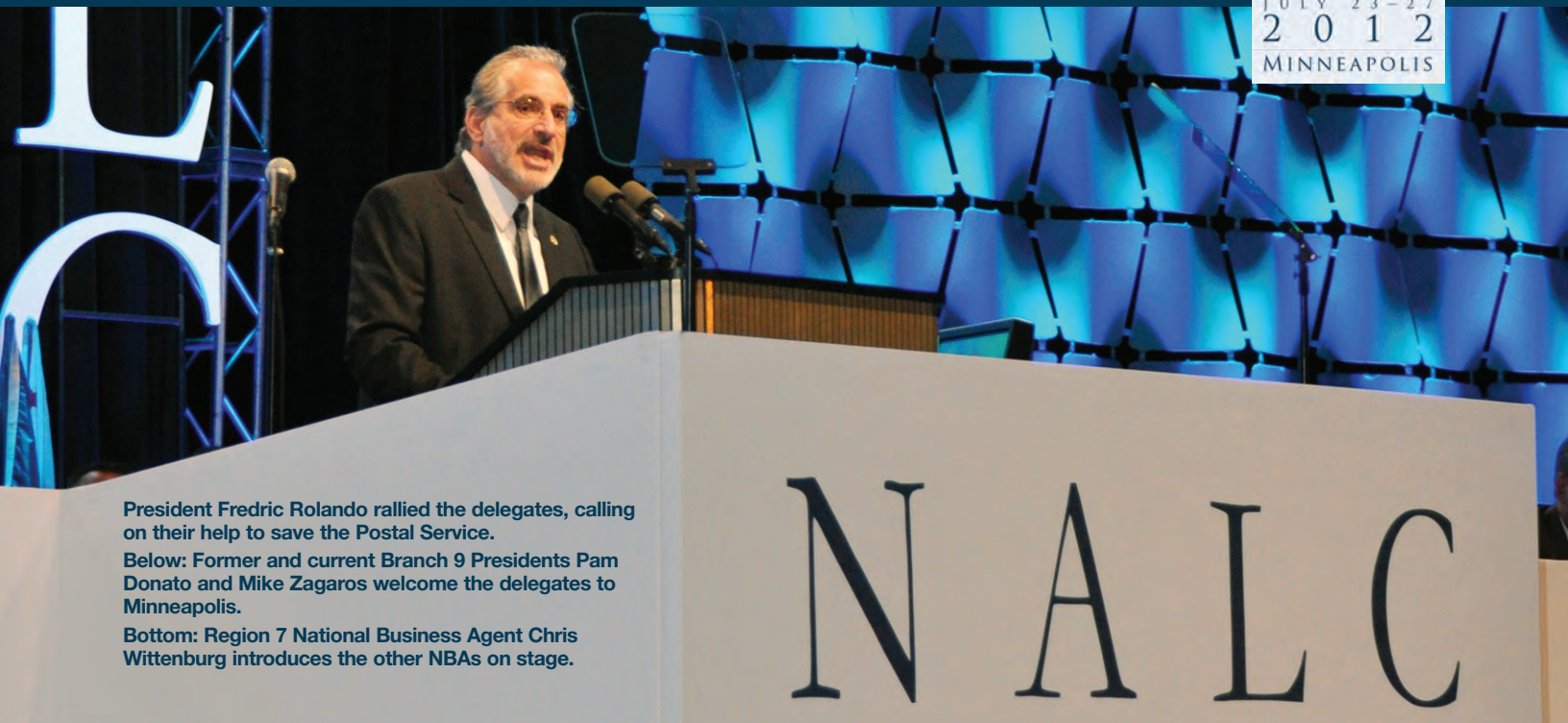


NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE



TUESDAY, JULY 24, COVERING THE FIRST SESSION, MONDAY, JULY 23



President Fredric Rolando rallied the delegates, calling on their help to save the Postal Service.

Below: Former and current Branch 9 Presidents Pam Donato and Mike Zagaros welcome the delegates to Minneapolis.

Bottom: Region 7 National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg introduces the other NBAs on stage.

'IF WE DON'T SAVE THE USPS, NO ONE ELSE WILL'

NALC President Fredric V. Rolando told the thousands of delegates assembled in Minneapolis on Monday for the union's 68th biennial convention that city letter carriers have a "secret weapon" in our

fight to preserve the Postal Service and our future.

"We have each other," he said.

"Remember to keep your head up, and remember the power of a union. You have a way to overcome all the fear and uncertainty about the future by fighting for each other today."

In his second convention keynote address as NALC president, Rolando referred several times to the rough ride letter carriers will face in the coming weeks and months.

"Fasten your seat belts, brothers and sisters," he said. "This convention is going to make history. And we are going to face extreme turbulence as we do so.

"But make no mistake," he said. "Our primary task this week will be to determine the future of the Postal Service. That is bold, some might think arrogant, talk. But it is true.

"The future of the Service is too monumental a task to leave to the hopeless management running the agency, or to this deadlocked

Congress, or this disengaged White House. If we, the National Association of Letter Carriers, do not seize the moment, show the way and demonstrate that the Service can be saved—and how—the sad fact is that no one else will do it. Period."

THE WORK BEGINS

The letter carrier band from Salt Lake City provided a selection of rousing musical numbers as delegates streamed into the Hall D of the Minneapolis Convention Center on Monday morning.

National Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel called the convention to order shortly after 10 a.m., calling to the stage South Florida Branch 1071's Stephanie Bostic to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Next, Minneapolis Branch 9 Executive Vice President Darrell Maus led the delegates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by some words of encouragement and inspiration from Rabbi Melissa Simon, leader of Minneapolis' Shir Tikvah.



Broendel then asked the delegates to observe a moment of silence to remember NALC members who had died since the union last met in convention, in Anaheim in 2010.

Current Branch 9 President Mike Zagaros joined former branch President Pam Donato—now serving in Washington as a special assistant to President Rolando—in welcoming delegates to the “City of Lakes.” Also greeting the assembly were Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak.

Next, Broendel acknowledged the NALC’s retired national officers who are on hand for the convention. She then asked Region 7 National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg—whose region includes Minnesota—to take the podium to introduce the other NBAs to the audience and acknowledge each region’s administrative assistants. Broendel then returned to the microphone, introduced each of the union’s resident national officers, and then asked delegates to give a warm letter carrier welcome to President Rolando.

SETTING THE STAGE

“Minneapolis has a special place in American history,” the president said as he began his keynote address to the convention. In 1934, he said, “a truckers’ strike turned into a months-long general strike in this city that created mass support for unionization.”

Minnesota, he said, produced four giants in the United States Senate: Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, Walter Mondale and Paul Wellstone. “Boy, could we use a few of them in the Senate today,” he said wryly.

Rolando immediately got down to business, outlining some of the challenges letter carriers face in 2012, not least of which is the Postal Service’s financial trouble. But worse, he said, “it has no strategy—zero—and no business plan—zero.”

Postal managers, he said, have only one answer: “Cut service. Cut Saturday delivery. Close facilities. Cut the workforce. Reduce wages and benefits. Contract out. Shrink, shrink, shrink ourselves.”

Making things even more complicated are the rampant anti-union sentiment in today’s America, and a Congress that is deadlocked on most issues, not just postal ones.

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

“But to criticize is easy,” Rolando said. “The real question is whether we have a solution.”

For help in finding a solution, he said, the NALC last fall turned to Ron Bloom, whom President Barack Obama tapped in 2009 to save and restructure the auto industry. Bloom also had a measure of success in helping to turn around America’s steel industry.

“The bottom line of Ron’s work, and our own knowledge and experience, is that

there is a viable Postal Service that is possible in the future,” he said. “But not with business as usual. Business as usual will mean ‘no business.’”

If we let nature take its course, Rolando said, we won’t be fighting five-day delivery. “We’ll be fighting three-day delivery—or worse. And we won’t be fighting for a better contract. We’ll be fighting to keep any kind of contract.

“Change is coming, brothers and sisters,” the president said. “The only thing we need to decide is: Will we be the agents of that change, or the victims of it?”

“I’m here to say: We must be agents, not victims.”

Our challenge, Rolando said, is to find our place in the 21st century.

“We must be the driving force with regard to innovation,” he said. “We, the people in this room, must summon the courage to lead. If we don’t do it, nobody will.

“The Postal Service must innovate to survive,” Rolando said, “but it cannot innovate if it dismantles itself. That’s why we have to keep working in Washington and across the country to stop our political enemies from dismantling the Postal Service before we can help reinvent it.”

BARGAINING IN A CRISIS

Rolando reminded delegates that the convention takes place shortly before the beginning of arbitration hearings toward our next national agreement with the Postal Service.

“The Postal Service has chosen to end 10 years of cooperative labor relations that began after the anthrax attacks in 2001 and extended through the financial meltdown of 2008,” he said. “It has chosen the path of confrontation.”

The president assured delegates that the union will vigorously defend letter carrier wages and benefits and will seek to advance bargaining goals through interest arbitration.

“That includes having the vision and courage to take a hard look at every level of our organization to determine what changes are necessary to ensure that we have the ability to adapt to changing circumstances,” Rolando said. “Whether that includes downsizing, restructuring or just minor tinkering, we must position ourselves to adapt so that we can remain a

great union that can protect the rights and interests of our members.”

Bringing his remarks to a close, Rolando returned to his address’ opening imagery. “There is turbulence ahead, brothers and sisters,” he said. “We have no choice but to fly through it, seatbelts fastened—through the legislative and political battles, through the fight for a new business model, through interest arbitration and through the struggles to enforce our contract.”

Our constitution tells us what to do during the convention, Rolando said, “and we will do it with our usual dedication and respect for each other, and our diverse views.

“We have 270,000 brothers and sisters committed to helping each other and to building a better workplace and a better country, one family at a time,” the president concluded. “Let’s make this the best convention in the history of the NALC.”

LEGISLATORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

President Rolando then invited a succession of House and Senate members to the stage, beginning with Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee.

“On every street in every city and town, letter carriers provide a service we simply could not live without,” she said. “For so many Americans, you are their lifeline.”

Wasserman Schultz then introduced a special video message from President Barack Obama.

“I want to thank you for standing up every day for American workers,” Obama said. “Together, you represent what’s best about this country. Your work isn’t easy, but day in, day out, you perform a service that keeps our entire economy on track.”

Next, President Rolando invited to the podium Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), whose tight schedule allowed her to make a few brief remarks to the delegation.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

President Rolando invited the chairman of the Credentials Committee, Rod Holub of Manhattan, KS Branch 1019, to deliver the committee’s preliminary report. Holub said that by Sunday evening, 5,275 delegates representing 49 states and 494 branches had arrived at the convention.



Executive Vice President
Timothy O'Malley



Director of City
Delivery Lew Drass



Director of Safety and
Health Manuel Peralta Jr.



Rolando noted that these figures indicated a quorum was present, under the provisions of Article 3, Section 3 of the National Constitution. Holub said that since delegates were still arriving, the committee's final report would be presented later in the week.

Rolando then asked Rules Committee Chairman Dan Tegreeny, a member of Orlando, FL Branch 1091, to come to the stage to introduce his committee: Karrie Blough, Austin, TX Br. 181; and Stephanie Stewart, Central Iowa Merged Br. 352. A motion to accept the convention's rules passed by a voice vote.

"THE PUBLIC LOVES THE POSTAL SERVICE"

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) was escorted to the stage shortly after noon by the Minneapolis delegation. "You have my undying, unrelenting support" in efforts to save the Postal Service, Ellison told the delegates. "You have the strong support of many, many members of Congress who are willing to stand with you."

To push Congress to act, he said, letter carriers should look to average Americans. "The public loves the Postal Service," he said. "If you organize them, you will win."

The delegates offered letter carrier cheers for all the congressional speakers.

President Rolando then introduced his appointee as election commissioner and Chairman of the Board of Tellers, Joe

DeRossi of Brooklyn, NY Branch 41. DeRossi read the members of the Board of Tellers: Helen Amill, Branch 36, New York, NY; David Barbuzzi, Branch 25, Massachusetts Northeast Merged; Bill Bauder, Branch 442, Spokane, WA; James Beach, Branch 644, Muscatine, IA; Kevin Boyer, Branch 763, Columbia, MO; Shawn Boyd, Branch 132, Dallas; Karen Ceska, Branch 11, Chicago; Patricia Corrales, Branch 24, Los Angeles; Tonya Detrick, Branch 443, Hagerstown, MD; Rich Folmer, Branch 268, Princeton, NJ; Bill Hoaglund, Branch 574, Kenosha, WI; Ben Jackson, Branch 73, Atlanta; Gary Kakalia, Branch 1100, Garden Grove, CA; Ernest Knight, Branch 1071, South Florida; Dave Lamontagne, Branch 46, Western Massachusetts; Doug Lape, Branch 43, Cincinnati; Jim Lostumbo, Branch 134, Syracuse, NY; Richard Lujan, Branch 5996, Centennial Colorado; 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; Sandy Otis Walker, Branch 914, Lake Charles, LA; John Paige, Branch 927, Pocatello, ID; Margaret Parker, Branch 219, Aurora,

Top left: Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN)
Above: President Barack Obama's video greeting to the NALC members
Far left: Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
Left: Chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)

IL; Paul Peterman, Branch 2502, Las Vegas, NV; Jeffrey Rainey, Branch 30, Kansas City, MO; Paul Roue, Branch 1058, Hibbing, MN; Paul Roznowski, Branch 3126, Royal Oak, MI; Paul Toms, Branch 39, Indianapolis; Chris Verville, Branch 4, Nashville, TN; Andrew Weiner, Branch 562, Jamaica, NY; and Timothy Whelan, Branch 157, Philadelphia, PA.

FUTURE OF THE NALC

President Rolando then reviewed the resolutions passed at the 67th Annual Convention in Anaheim two years ago and the progress NALC had made on them. He proposed suspending the rules for about an hour during the Wednesday session to open the floor to a discussion about the future of the NALC, which the delegates approved.

The delegates voted to approve *en bloc* the National Agreement resolutions that had been recommended for approval by the Executive Council, and considered the resolutions recommended for disapproval. The Council called for disapproval of several resolutions because it wanted to preserve flexibility in negotiations. The makers of four resolutions agreed to changes to the wording of the resolutions that had been recommended by the Executive Council, making each acceptable to the



Secretary-Treasurer
Jane Broendel

Council. Sponsors of two other resolutions withdrew them.

The convention also voted down two resolutions by agreeing to the recommendation of disapproval by the Executive Council for each. One resolution called for NALC to negotiate for higher pay for carriers working in an FSS environment. The Executive Council recommended disapproval of this resolution on the grounds that all letter carriers should get equal compensation. The second resolution called for larger uniform allotments for carriers working in cold climates. The Council said that warm-climate clothes require more frequent laundering and replacement, so a different allotment was not called for.

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel then presented her report to the convention, including membership figures.

"There is no good news to report—our membership numbers are drastically declining," she said. "In just four years, the craft has decreased by 16.4 percent." Broendel said the union's active members total 180,875—a figure as low as that of spring of 1980. This reflects a decline in letter carriers working for the Postal Service, Broendel said, but also a slight drop in the percentage of letter carriers

who are NALC members. Including retirees, the union's membership is 270,015, the lowest since 1985. One-third of the members are now retirees who pay dues at a lower rate. Broendel called on NALC members to help offset this trend by boosting their organizing efforts.

MEMBERS IN ACTION

President Rolando took the floor to present awards to branches with the best organizing success. "The best branches passionately build our union," he said, "one 1187 at a time."

Patterson, NJ Branch 120 was recognized as the best-organized branch with fewer than 500 members, with a perfect 100 percent—all 151 of the branch's carriers are NALC members. The branch with the best organizing rate among branches with 500 to 999 members is Birmingham, AL Branch 530, which has a 98.2 percent organization rate. South Florida Branch 1071 won the award among branches with 1,000 or more members. The branch has an organizing rate of 98.5 percent.

In addition to the awards, the honor roll of branches with 95 percent or better organization rates appeared on the screen.

Keeping to the organizing theme, President Rolando noted that letter carriers played an important role in the success of the American Federation of Government Employees in gaining representation for Transportation Security Administration employees last year by sending released carriers to help. He also announced that some delegates will march Thursday evening to a rally at a downtown Minneapolis Verizon store to support that company's workers in their contract negotiations.

Ken Christy of Aurora, IL Branch 219, chairman of the Biennial Report

Committee, then took the floor. Christy introduced the members of the committee, Larissa Parde of Lincoln, NE Branch 8 and Joe Henschen of Pinellas Park, FL Branch 1477. The convention voted to accept the committee's report.

Rolando returned to the podium to inform delegates that anyone who wants to support letter carriers serving in the military as reservists, including several hundred currently deployed on active duty, can write messages on postcards that will be distributed and collected Tuesday on the convention floor. They also can donate care package items at a special table in the registration area.

The delegates then considered two general resolutions. One, recommended for disapproval by the Executive Council because it was likely not allowed by law, was withdrawn. The second resolution called for sharing Customer Connect and Business Connect revenue with employees. The Executive Council recommended this resolution for disapproval, saying that the revenue programs strengthen the Postal Service and all letter carriers should benefit equally. It would also require NALC to bargain for other crafts. The delegates voted down this resolution.

Throughout the day, delegates spoke from the floor in support of former Director of City Delivery Dale Hart, who was recently injured in a fall, and to call for a collection to assist a postal clerk in Aurora, CO, who lost a son in Friday's movie theatre shooting there. Minneapolis Branch 9 President Mike Zagaros and Boston Branch 34 President Bob Lind each spoke on behalf of officers in their branches who have recently been hospitalized.

After a few announcements, Rolando recessed the convention one minute before 3 p.m.



NALC AUXILIARY MONDAY, JULY 23

The sounds of the NALC St. Louis band under the management of Charles Schwendt and directed by Dolores Ullrich greeted auxiliary convention delegates to their opening session of the 53rd Biennial Convention.

Colors were presented by Bill Prather (Auxiliary 141, Oklahoma City, OK, Branch 458, Oklahoma City, OK and Retired U.S. Air Force, 1962-1982) and Mike Rasmussen (Auxiliary 430, Racine, WI, Branch 436, Racine, WI and U.S. Navy Vietnam veteran, 1969-1972). Donna Beckman (Branch 530, Birmingham, AL) sang the National Anthem and led the Pledge of Allegiance. National Auxiliary Treasurer Kathy Miller (Auxiliary 200, Iowa City, IA) presented a Moment of Grace, followed by the Collect.

Minnesota State Auxiliary Vice President and Treasurer Alice Weed (Auxiliary 2809, Mankato, MN) welcomed

all delegates to Minneapolis and Minnesota. Weed also gave a humorous, brief tutorial on the "language of Minnesotans," such as, "Uff da! It's hot outside!"

President Kirby made committee assignments including at least one delegate from each state. Distributions Chair Betty Johnson (Auxiliary 28, Dallas, TX) introduced her committee: Peggy Winston (Auxiliary 1200, Newport News, VA), Doris Grilliott (Auxiliary 138, Dayton, OH) and Ruth Myers (Auxiliary 260, Salem, OR). Credentials Committee Chair Tonya Lloyd (Auxiliary 111, Austin, TX) and committee member Selina Dornan (Auxiliary 1248, Muskogee, OK) gave their report. President Kirby thanked them for their diligence and service to the auxiliary.

Rules Committee Chair Frances Mangano (Auxiliary 2003, Brooklyn, NY)

presented the rules, which were approved as presented.

President Kirby reminded all delegates to be sure to volunteer for the troops project that will be taking place all week. Postcards will be distributed during Tuesday's session for delegates to write notes of thanks and well wishes to be included with the care packages.

A video based on the book "Who Moved My Cheese?" was presented. Following the video, open discussion was held on recognizing the changes the auxiliary needs to make and ways to implement those changes in order to be relevant, attract new members, and be ready to address the political challenges during these critical times we are all facing.

The meeting was recessed at 1 p.m.

M. MARIE RASMUSSEN,
NALCA ASSISTANT SECRETARY