

NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE



FRIDAY, JULY 27, COVERING THE FOURTH SESSION, THURSDAY, JULY 26



'WHERE'S YOUR RED SHIRT?'

Unifying Thursday's wide-ranging proceedings—where discussion topics moved from politics to communications to letter carrier generosity—were the special red T-shirts worn by thousands of delegates to signify their commitment to the letter carriers' political action fund, the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE).

Active and retired letter carriers who either already were signed up as COLCPE contributors at the "Gimme 5 for COLCPE" level, or who made catch-up contributions to reach that level during the convention, received the shirts bearing the NALC logo and the words "Delivering for America" on

the front, and the phrase, "Our Fight, Our Future" on the back.

Also marking the day were rousing speeches from labor leaders, lively discussions about topics important to carriers and the larger labor movement, and a peek at the next convention two years away.

'I STILL BELIEVE'

The Salt Lake City Letter Carrier Band returned to the convention hall Thursday and provided a selection of classic and modern pop tunes to delight delegates as they entered the hall for a fourth day filled with the union's business of discussing resolutions, hearing inspirational speeches and rewarding letter carriers for exceptional service.

President Fredric Rolando opened the day at 10 a.m. by showing a video review of the NALC's Sept. 27, 2011 rallies held at the home office of nearly every member of the U.S. House of Representatives. The video, featuring the Frank Turner tune "I Still Believe," showed home video clips and still photos of the rallies calling on the House to take up H.R. 1351, the bill introduced by Rep. Stephen

Lynch (D-MA) in the spring of 2011. The bill calls for refunding the Postal Service's pension account surpluses within the Federal Employees Retirement System and the Civil Service Retirement System—surpluses that two independent accounting firms have estimated to be between \$50 billion and \$75 billion.

Next, Rolando invited to the stage Birmingham, AL Branch 530 member Donna Beckwood, who sang a stirring *a capella* rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Minneapolis Branch 9 Trustee Mike Smith led delegates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and Imam Makram El-Amin of Masjid An-Nur ("Mosque of the Light") in North Minneapolis sang the invocation in Arabic, followed by a recitation of the prayer's English translation.

Quickly moving the day into political high gear, Rolando showed the convention a video that encouraged letter carrier activists to get involved with the AFL-CIO's Labor 2012 campaign. "Here's the truth," federation President Richard Trumka said in the video: "Our job is to build a movement of independent men and women, and from what I've seen, we're on our way."

"We have to elect a leader we can count on," he said. "Elections matter, and



this one matters a lot. The solution is us and the movement we've made."

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS, GENERAL MYTHS

The convention then continued deliberation on the remaining general resolutions, with discussions led in succession by Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Director of Retired Members Ernie Kirkland and Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman. Delegates mainly upheld the Executive Council's decisions of approval or disapproval on each resolution, sometimes following a delegate's request for a division. In a few cases, modest word changes—such as the addition of "where appropriate" or "when possible"—helped move the Council to shift a disapproval to approval.

Between the consideration of several resolutions, President Rolando provided delegates with background on some of the Executive Council's rulings and dispelled some myths.

We have to take the lead in the fight to save the Postal Service, he said. "And where appropriate and where conducive to our strategy, we certainly are building coalitions and have been all over the place, and we appreciate the efforts of those who are doing that all over the country.

"The NALC is not looking to do this alone," President Rolando said. "What we've said is, 'If we don't take the lead, nobody else is going to.'"

He also took specific issue with some resolutions' sentiment that the national union needs to get on board with the idea of forming coalitions.

"Please stop it," he said. "Don't misrepresent the NALC. The NALC has been building coalitions for the three years I've been president, and a few years before that.

"Nobody has reached out to the other postal unions more than the NALC," Rolando said.

But sometimes our differences with other unions complicate our ability to

form coalitions, he made clear. "How do you want me to march with the APWU against (S.) 1789 when they support 1789?" he asked. "How do you want me to work with the rural carriers to kill (H.R.) 2309 when they want to amend 2309?"

"When appropriate' is the key," Rolando said. "We want to reach out to everybody."

He called a "myth" the charge by some that working with Lazard's Ron Bloom amounted to forming a coalition with Wall Street. "We do not have a coalition with Wall Street," Rolando said. Even so, "it would be irresponsible for this union to not go to the people who do this for a living to find out if there's a business there and hear what they have to say.

"What we do with it is our decision," he said. "This is too important a fight. Let's get on the same page."

Rolando also spoke about some resolutions that called for the removal of Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe and certain anti-union members of the Postal Board of Governors.

The Executive Council takes the view that the overall structure of the Board of Governors needs to be fixed, he said.

"The Board of Governors right now is more dysfunctional than ever," President Rolando said. "At a time like this, when the Board of Governors is this dysfunctional, to ask them to replace (Donahoe)—whom we've certainly already gone record as wanting out of there—there is a good chance (the board) could put somebody like Jim Miller in there." Miller was President Ronald Reagan's budget chief, an advocate of government privatization who was nominated to the board by President George W. Bush in 2002.

"We kind of liken this to, 'Bonnie and Clyde aren't getting along too well, and they get divorced and Clyde gets a new Bonnie,'" he said with a laugh. "It can get worse. It did get worse. We wanted (former Postmaster General Jack) Potter out of there...and look whom we got."

FLOOR RESOLUTIONS

The convention considered two floor resolutions. One was from New Orleans Branch 124, calling on the Postal Service to consider creating a commemorative stamp in honor of those Gulf Coast residents who died in 2005 during the twin disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The convention approved the resolution.

The second resolution, brought to the floor by the NALC Executive Council, asked convention delegates to endorse

Barack Obama for a second term as president of the United States. The Council touted some of Obama's first-term accomplishments, such as his work to undo his predecessor's anti-worker agenda by nominating pro-worker advocates to the National Labor Relations Board and the National Mediation Board, not to mention his signing into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Affordable Care Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

The Council contrasted Obama's record with that of the presumptive Republican nominee, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney who, if elected, has promised to call for cuts in Social Security, to turn Medicare into an underfunded voucher program, and to cut up to 10 percent of the federal workforce. The Council said that Romney repeatedly has demonstrated an anti-union, anti-worker philosophy, evidenced primarily by his support for a national "right to work" (for less) law.

Perhaps most significantly of all, Romney has endorsed privatizing the U.S. Postal Service.

"Be it resolved: That the National Association of Letter Carriers join with the AFL-CIO's Labor to Labor 2012 Campaign to mobilize our members and other working people," the resolution read, and that the NALC "endorse President Barack Obama for a second term as President of the United States of America in 2012."

Although quite a few delegates took to microphones to debate the pros and cons of making such an endorsement, the convention ultimately voted to approve the Executive Council's resolution.

A third floor resolution, a Mutual Benefit Association proposal by the Oklahoma State Association to increase coverage amounts of life benefits policies, was withdrawn.



Director, Health Benefits
Brian Hellman



Left: CWA President Larry Cohen

Right: UNI-Americas President Rueben Cortina



Right: Muscular Dystrophy Association Goodwill Ambassador Bryson Foster shares a joke with NALC President Fredric Rolando.

Far right (top to bottom): NALC MDA Co-ordinator Jim Williams and MDA's Tom Boyle

'WE STAND UP, WE FIGHT BACK'

President Rolando then welcomed Communications Workers of America President Larry Cohen to the stage.

Like nearly all the delegates who wore red shirts to demonstrate their support for COLCPE on Thursday, Cohen also was wearing the NALC's red shirt. He explained that his shirt color follows a long tradition in his union—23 years ago, he said, a CWA striker was killed by a scab, and members of his union now wear red shirts on Thursday to honor him.

His union's history has inspired Cohen to resist attacks on workers' rights. "When you cut our pay, we say no. When you cut our health care, we say no. When you destroy our retirement, we say no," he said. "We stand up, we fight back."

Cohen told the delegates about his union's ongoing struggle with Verizon to get a fair contract and compared Verizon's management's antics to those of the Postal Service. "We get management, whether the Postal Service or Verizon, that wants to shrink us, to keep us in a box, until they can shut us down and throw us out."

To support CWA, several hundred delegates were scheduled to march to the downtown Minneapolis Verizon store for a rally following the close of Thursday's session of the convention.

Cohen pledged his union's support for the NALC's efforts to save the Postal Service. "We will fight back, and we will be there together with you in that fight to save a public Postal Service as if it's our own fight—because it is our own fight."

TAKING OUR MESSAGE PUBLIC

President Rolando then explained that MSNBC television host Ed Schultz, who had been scheduled to speak at the convention, could not come because of a health crisis affecting his wife. In lieu of his appearance, delegates watched excerpts from Schultz's show that demonstrated his knowledge of the real causes of the postal crisis, his disdain for Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and others attacking the Postal Service, and his strong support for letter carriers.

"This kind of 'free media' support is invaluable," President Rolando said after the Schultz video. Rolando provided details on NALC's aggressive media and communications strategy. "Whenever I can, I accept invitations to appear on national television and radio shows—as do many of you at the state and local level. And we have made a concerted effort to disseminate our views in the print media." NALC staff members keep in



close touch with reporters to make sure they get the facts right and give our views fair coverage, he said.

NALC also uses paid television advertisements to reach the public, he said. The delegates then saw some of NALC's ads, and also a commercial broadcast on the Internet by Issa—using thousands of dollars in taxpayer funds—that contained egregious falsehoods about the postal crisis.

'NOTHING CAN STOP US'

President Rolando then welcomed Ruben Cortina, president of UNI-Americas, a regional organization of UNI Global Union.

Cortina brought a message of hope to the delegates. In contrast with stagnant economies, harmful austerity measures and hostility to union rights in other parts of the world, labor unions in several Central and South American nations are gaining ground in tandem with their economies.

In many regions of the world, "we're going back to social Darwinism, with its concept of every man and woman for himself," he said. "That's the new concept of the right—fiscal consolidation."

Bucking the trend, unions have succeeded in organizing even stubbornly anti-union companies such as Walmart in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, he said. He attributed the success to union activists in these countries who refused to back down.

"You can have good laws, but you need strong unions. If we mobilize and we have

strong unions, nothing can stop us."

Cortina urged letter carriers to resist the forces aligned against labor and remain united with sister unions in the Western Hemisphere. He pledged his solidarity with NALC: "We support you in your fight against privatization."

The delegates gave Cortina a letter carrier cheer.

MILEAGE AND PER DIEM COMMITTEE

Antonia Shields of Birmingham, AL Branch 530, chair of the Mileage and Per Diem Committee, came to the stage with her committee to submit a final report.

Shields said the total mileage and per diem for the convention is \$67,595.46. She also reported that an additional \$1,200 was allocated to committee member expenses. The report was accepted by delegates.

SIXTY YEARS WITH MDA

Rolando then called NALC MDA Director Jim Williams of Portland, OR Branch 82 to the podium. Williams introduced Tom Boyle, MDA's vice president of business development.

Boyle thanked carriers for their unwavering support for helping those with muscular dystrophy and their families, and for supporting research toward treatments and cures. "It's been an amazing 60 years," Boyle said, looking back on NALC's commitment, which began in 1952, to supporting MDA. "The spirit is just as large as it

was those 60 years ago.” Delegates enjoyed a video about MDA and the benefits of their support for the organization.

President Rolando then brought to the stage MDA National Goodwill Ambassador Bryson Foster, a 12-year-old boy from Charlotte, NC who has muscular dystrophy. Rolando interviewed Foster about his interests in sports and his favorite activities at MDA summer camps. Foster charmed the delegates by ribbing Rolando about his beloved New York Yankees and telling jokes. He told Rolando that when he grows up, he wants to be “starting quarterback of the Cincinnati Bengals. Or a broadcaster.”

After giving a letter carrier cheer for Foster, the delegates watched a brief video showing bloopers as several NBAs struggled to pronounce Rolando’s name correctly while videotaping public service announcements asking letter carriers to support MDA.

President Rolando then presented awards to the top MDA fundraising branches:

- Category 10 (10-49 members)**
Asheboro, NC Br. 2560—\$7,974
 - Category 9 (50-99 members)**
Manteca, CA Br. 4249—\$7,250
 - Category 8 (100-199 members)**
Fargo-W. Fargo, ND Br. 205—\$14,709
 - Category 7 (200-349 members)**
Saginaw, MI Br. 74—\$10,950
 - Category 6 (350-499 members)**
Rockford, IL Br. 245—\$17,298
 - Category 5 (500-699 members)**
Grand Rapids, MI Br. 56—\$22,972
 - Category 4 (700-999 members)**
Northeast NY Br. 358—\$21,511
 - Category 3 (1,000-1,499 members)**
Arizona Merged Br. 1902—\$20,804
 - Category 2 (1,500-1,999 members)**
Atlanta, GA Br. 73—\$25,173
 - Category 1 (2,000 or more members)**
Long Island, NY Br. 6000—\$51,180
 - Grand Prize**
New Jersey Merged Br. 38—\$102,803
- Next, marching to the “Rocky” theme, members of the Philadelphia Branch 157 delegation came to the stage tossing Tastykakes, a favorite treat from their hometown, to delegates. Branch President



NALC members vote for AFL-CIO delegates.

Randy Zebin told delegates what they can expect in Philadelphia when it hosts the 69th Biennial Convention in 2014—a walkable city with great restaurants, nightlife, museums, casinos and, of course, cheesesteaks.

Election Commissioner Joe DeRossi of Brooklyn, NY Branch 41 then explained voting procedures for the election of AFL-CIO delegates. Election tellers ran the election as the delegates exited the hall following the end of the day’s business.

President Rolando recessed the convention at 3:12 p.m.



NALC AUXILIARY THURSDAY, JULY 26

Toes were tapping to the sounds of the NALC Pittsburgh band directed by Ken Slish as delegates reconvened for their final session. Mike Zagaros, president of Minneapolis Branch 9, paid tribute to our nation’s flag by singing the National Anthem. President Lindy Kirby reconvened the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

President Kirby announced the appointment of Pam Fore (Auxiliary 2621, Lakeland, FL) as the new NALCA treasurer. Kirby further gave thanks and farewell to retiring board members Kathy Miller (Treasurer) and Sue Prather (Assistant Secretary). Their talents and service to the Auxiliary will be missed.

Resolutions Chair LeeAnn Garhofer (Auxiliary 758, St. Paul, MN) introduced committee members Janice Vandenburg (Auxiliary 78, Omaha, NE) and Teresa Paige (Auxiliary 772, Pocatello, ID). There were no resolutions to present. Country Store Chair Edie Pottenger (Auxiliary 444, Denver, CO) thanked everyone who donated items and

those who worked shifts. The final numbers will be announced in an upcoming issue of *The Postal Record*. Distributions Committee Chair Betty Johnson (Auxiliary 28, Dallas, TX) gave the report of the committee. The report was accepted as presented. The greetings committee consisted of the NALCA officers and their spouses. Jim Kirby (Auxiliary 465, Branch 574, Kenosha, WI) challenged each delegate present to sign up at least one member to the Auxiliary and increase the Auxiliary membership by 8,000 by tomorrow! Tellers Committee Chair Sandi Williams (Auxiliary 138, Dayton, OH) and committee members Crystal Bragg (Auxiliary 153, Decatur, IL), Sandy Struecker (Auxiliary 213, Fort Dodge, IA) and Patricia LaCaze (Auxiliary 1223, Alexandria, LA) were thanked for their service. President Kirby thanked Sergeant-at-Arms Ed Wills (Auxiliary 138, Dayton, OH) and Victor Smith (Auxiliary 2646, Greenwood, MS). President Kirby thanked everyone who served on committees for their diligence and service to the Auxiliary.

NALC’s MDA Director, Jim Williams, received a standing ovation as he entered the room. Williams gave thanks to the Auxiliary for their support to the cause over the years and challenged everyone to do even more to find a cure. A check for \$8,500 was presented to Williams representing funds the Auxiliary branches have raised and donated since May and during the convention. MDA Vice President and Director of Program Development Tom Boyle thanked the Auxiliary members for their continued support to MDA and introduced National Goodwill Ambassador

Bryson Foster. Bryson gave an excellent overview of what our Auxiliary support means to MDA. Bryson also entertained the delegates with a glimpse of his personal life and his personal likes about school, football teams and MDA summer camp.

Nalcrest trustees Tom Young and Don Southern were welcomed to the podium. They shared a video presentation about Nalcrest and answered several questions.

Secretary Marie Rasmussen gave a preliminary report on the convention fundraising efforts. Final numbers will be posted on the Auxiliary’s web page and in *The Postal Record*. Secretary Rasmussen gave special thanks to the members of NALC’s Communications Department, Mike Shea, Joe Conway and Rick Hodges, for their support in assisting the Auxiliary with web updates and for the excellence they put into every issue of *The Postal Record* and the *NALC Convention Chronicle*.

Secretary Rasmussen announced that Lakeland, FL Auxiliary 2621 won the membership contest with a 90 percent increase in 2012. Accepting the award were Nancy Southern, Pam Fore, and Rachel Mitchell.

NALC Executive Vice President Tim O’Malley installed the officers for 2012-2014. The NALCA officers are Linda Kirby, president; Cythensis Lang, vice president; Marie Rasmussen, secretary; Pam Fore, treasurer and George Anna Myers, assistant secretary.

President Kirby declared the 53rd National Convention adjourned at 2 p.m.

M. MARIE RASMUSSEN,
NALCA SECRETARY

