

# NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE



THURSDAY, JULY 26, COVERING THE **THIRD SESSION**, WEDNESDAY, JULY 25



## ‘REAL SOLIDARITY’

**O**n Wednesday in Minneapolis, letter carrier delegates to the NALC’s 68th biennial convention renewed their commitment to and participation in the larger U.S. labor movement, inspired by a succession of speeches from union leaders both national and international, plus a rousing video review of the NALC’s struggles and successes since the 2010 convention in Anaheim. Carriers also discussed how the union can optimize its resources in the face of a slowly shrinking postal workforce.

President Fredric Rolando called the convention to order at 10 a.m. and welcomed to the podium Greg White of Gulf Coast, MS Branch 1374, who performed “The Star-Spangled Banner” *a capella*. Minneapolis Branch 9’s Chuck Glover, editor of *Branch 9 News*, led delegates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and Rev. John Gutterman of the local United Church of Christ gave the invocation.

Rolando showed delegates a video greeting from retired national Director of

City Delivery Dale Hart, who was injured in a fall earlier this year and lost the ability to move his arms and legs. Hart called on delegates to give their full support to President Rolando as the NALC enters interest arbitration and continues its battles on Capitol Hill.

National Trustees Chairman Larry Brown reported that Hart and three other letter carriers—Boston Branch 34 Vice President Robert Simpson, Seattle Branch 79 member Keith Wagner and Columbus Branch 78 member Doug Poole—would receive equal shares of money collected for them at the convention and matched by the NALC. A portion of those proceeds also would be forwarded to American Postal Workers Union member Tom Sullivan, whose son was killed in the movie theater shooting in Aurora, CO on Friday.

Brown and fellow trustees Randall Keller and Mike Gill led the remaining deliberations on proposed amendments to the NALC Constitution. The conven-

**Top: AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka promises that NALC’s fight is his fight.**

**Left: Members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, including President Denis Lemelin (l), display their solidarity.**

**Right: National Postal Mail Handlers President John Hegarty pledges to coordinate political activities in the future.**



tion on Tuesday had voted to adopt *en bloc* those amendments recommended for approval by the NALC Executive Council, although members were given the chance to discuss those proposed amendments if they so chose. The convention voted to uphold the Council’s recommendation of disapproval on two of the remaining amendment proposals. The trustees also took turns presenting





The “Our Fight, Our Future” video showed delegates the struggles NALC members have faced over the last two years.

a summary of the Board’s biennial report to the convention printed in the Officers’ Report book.

## OUR FIGHT, OUR FUTURE

President Rolando then showed delegates a special video, titled “Our Fight, Our Future,” that reviewed our legislative and political battles of the last two years and previewed the ones ahead.

“The battle for the Postal Service is part of a larger war on workers,” Rolando said in the video. “We intend to keep fighting, not just for ourselves, but for all workers—public and private.”

The video also included interviews with a number of letter carrier activists from all over the country who had taken part in the nationwide rallies on Sept. 27, 2011 and April 12, 2012, or who participated in pro-labor protests in states such as Ohio, Wisconsin and Utah. It also showed some of the media engagement—including newspapers, radio and television—by President Rolando and others.

“Big business has decimated labor in the private sector,” Rolando said. “Now they’re coming after us. We are the last stand for labor unions as we know them. If we go down, so does the middle class.”

## NPMHU PRESIDENT JOHN HEGARTY

Rolando called to the stage National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty, who leads one of the other three postal unions.

“We’ve always worked together, on postal reform legislation and other postal legislation,” Hegarty said. “We need to keep our hard-fought benefits.”

He praised the NALC’s legislative and political work, as well as letter carriers’ presence in every neighborhood in the country six days a week.

“We may not always agree on exactly the right path forward,” Hegarty said, “but we do agree that cutting the word ‘service’ out of the United States Postal Service is a bad idea. We need to coordinate political activities and elect union-friendly candidates this fall.”

Hegarty also noted that President Rolando is set to speak at the NPMHU convention in a couple of weeks.

## AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY

Rolando outlined the process for nominating and electing NALC delegates to next year’s AFL-CIO convention. Nominations took place Wednesday and elections were set for Thursday afternoon. The president also introduced the current AFL-CIO delegates: Ingrid Armada, Providence Br. 15; Denise Brooks, Medford, OR Br. 1433; Lloyd Doucet Jr., New Orleans Branch 124; Anita Guzik, Los Angeles Br 24; Stephen Hanna, York, PA Br. 509; Charles Heege, New York City Br. 36; and Phillip Wilkes, Chicago Br. 11. (President Rolando and Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel, by virtue of their offices, also serve as AFL-CIO delegates.)

Then, continuing with the day’s theme of solidarity both with the NALC and the larger labor movement, Rolando introduced AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who was escorted to the stage by the NALC’s delegates to the AFL-CIO convention.

The labor federation leader called the NALC one of the strongest, most patriotic and most effective unions in America. “Dependable mail delivery is a core function of any government, and it shouldn’t be political,” he said. “But somebody forgot to tell Representative Darrell Issa and the Republican leadership in Congress.”

Trumka said that Issa has built his political ambitions on wrecking a service that’s older than America itself, adding: “He doesn’t care that the Postal Service is the glue that holds our national community together.”

“Compromising with destruction is destruction itself,” Trumka said. “We don’t want any part of it and our country doesn’t want any part of it.”

The AFL-CIO president praised the NALC’s legislative and political work. “Carriers released to work on campaigns are the backbone of the AFL-CIO legislative effort,” he said. “America needs our solidarity. The strength of our movement is solidarity. We’re going to win with activism and your union is leading the way.”

The assault on the Postal Service isn’t just letter carriers’ fight, Trumka said. “It’s the fight of every last trade unionist in this country. We’re going to make sure that we hold together and win this fight for the good of all of us.”

“Our job is to build power for workers, and we’re no strangers to hard work,” he said. “What we want is pretty simple—to work hard for a decent life. To get it, we’ve got to stand together.

“This is our country,” he concluded. “We built it, we make it run. It’s time that we took it back for the American people.”

After explaining the procedures for voting for delegates to the AFL-CIO convention, Rolando opened the floor to nominations. Though 14 delegates



From l: NALC Trustees Larry Brown (chairman), Randall Keller and Mike Gill





Richard Trumka

were nominated from the floor, only 12 completed the forms required to appear on the ballot. Voting will be conducted Thursday.

There are seven open delegate positions. The candidates will be listed on the ballot in this order, as determined by a random drawing:

**Anita Guzik**, Br. 24, Los Angeles  
**Don Hill**, Br. 120, Paterson, NJ  
**Ingrid Armada**, Br. 15, Providence, RI  
**Stephen R. Hanna**, Br. 509, York, PA  
**David Alan Hyman**, Br. 2902, Tri-Valley, CA  
**Lloyd P. Doucet Jr.**, Br. 124, New Orleans, LA  
**Charles P. Heege**, Br. 36, New York, NY  
**Denise Brooks**, Br. 1433, Medford, OR  
**Elise M. Foster**, Br. 11, Chicago, IL  
**Scott A. Van Derven**, Br. 2, Milwaukee, WI

**Right:** President Rolando asked members to share their ideas and opinions on how NALC should deal with a declining membership number.

**Below:** Members offered an array of ideas during the rap session style conversation.

**Joni E. Evans**, Br. 426, Hamilton, OH  
**Richard Koritz**, Br. 630, Greensboro, NC

## DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Rolando then opened the floor for a discussion of ideas about adapting to the decline in NALC membership.

"This ability to adapt is crucial, since there are many factors affecting us that we can't entirely control," he said. "It's hard to do, but it's our obligation as leaders of the union."

"The finances of the NALC are incredibly strong," he said, "and we want to keep it that way."

The delegates discussed a range of ideas, including shortening the national convention, sending fewer delegates to conventions, holding conventions every three or four years, realigning the regions, accelerating and encouraging branch mergers, and merging the NALC with other postal unions. The delegates provided their

input on the pros and cons of these and other ideas and their effect both on the union and on maintaining solidarity.

Rolando thanked the delegates for their input and said they were welcome to speak from the floor about the subject during the rest of the convention. He said he was looking into forming a committee to consider these and other ideas and to make recommendations for future discussions.

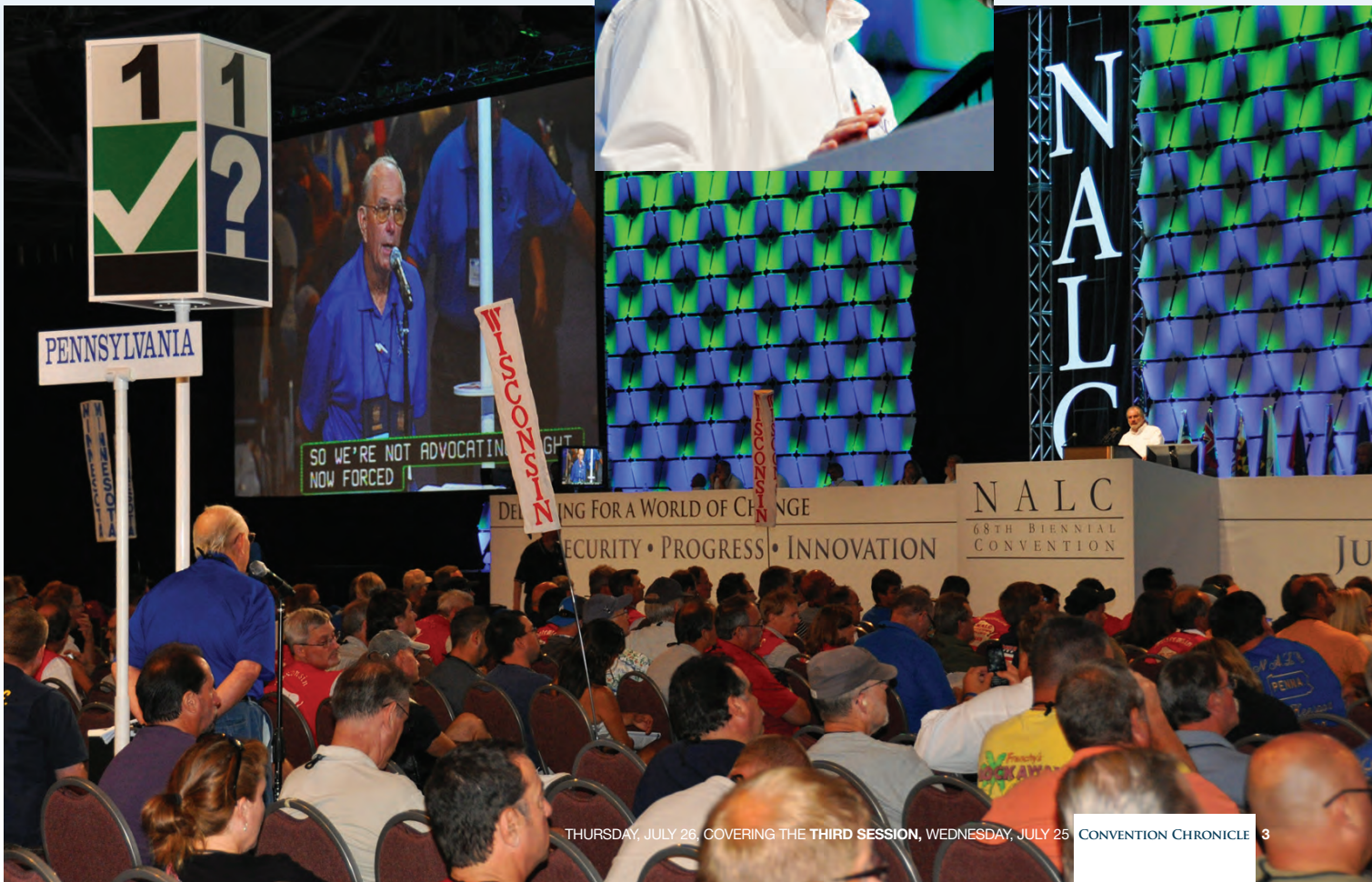
## 'IN THE SAME FIGHT NOW'

Rolando then welcomed guest speaker Denis Lemelin, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), to the podium.

Lemelin explained the struggle that his union and its 54,000 members face—similar to our own—in protecting the rights of Canadian postal workers and in preserving its postal service, Canada Post, from attempts to privatize and downsize it.

"We cannot bring good news from Canada," Lemelin said. "All postal workers in the world are in the same fight now." He described how a national government hostile to unions had attacked workers'

rights and Canada Post, leading to a two-week strike, a 58-hour filibuster by the opposition party in the Canadian House of Commons and court battles. Like the NALC, the CUPW has resolved to step in and save its employer from hostility





and neglect. "We are the ones who will protect the postal service," he said. "The vision of the future will come from us."

Postal workers in Canada have formed alliances with other groups to harness strong public support for their cause to protect Canada Post, Lemelin said. A recent survey, he said, showed that 70 percent of Canadians want to keep Canada Post the way it is.

"It's our responsibility to protect our members," he said, "but at the same time to be sure that protecting our members, protecting our jobs, is protecting the postal service and is protecting our future."

Lemelin then thanked the NALC for its long-standing support for its sister union in Canada. "This solidarity and this unity has

to be shown in action," he said. "There has to be something concrete." He said NALC had helped CUPW in many ways over the years, such as sharing knowledge about new postal technology, standing up for Canadian workers' rights under the North American Free Trade Agreement and exchanging ideas on innovation.

Lemelin then led the delegates in his union's cheer: "So-so-so-solidarité!" The delegates responded by giving Lemelin a letter carrier cheer.

## COMMITTEES

Rolando then called Rod Holub of Manhattan, KS Branch 1019 and chair of the Credentials Committee to the podium.

Holub introduced the members of the Credentials Committee: Craig Bishop, Br. 133, Sacramento, CA; Kathy Dahlman, Br. 540, Camden, NJ Merged; Marie Didier, Br. 825, Elmhurst, IL; John Dyce, Br. 385, Youngstown, OH; Joe Fell, Br. 1025, Gainesville, FL; Ethel Ford, Br. 283, Houston, TX; Robbie Gardiner, Br. 116, Fort Wayne, IN; Tom Gates, Br. 916, Emerald Empire, OR; Cindy Kirby, Br. 47, Denver, CO; Laurie Miale, Br. 1071, South Florida; Lynne Pendleton, Br. 1091, Central FL; Carol Ann Rasmus, Br. 67, Elizabeth, NJ; Brian Simmons, Br. 18, Southeast MA Merged; Amy Steffens, Br. 205, Fargo, ND; Michael Valdivia, Br. 576, Phoenix, AZ; Greg White, Br. 1374, Gulf Coast, MS; Delano Wilson, Br. 2611, Silver Spring, MD; and Jim Yates, Br. 6000, Long Island Merged, NY.

Holub then gave the final report of his committee. He said there are 28 national



**A delegate (r) stretches to donate money to a teller, as the attendees collected funds for stricken carriers and a clerk whose son died in Aurora, CO.**

officers, 73 delegates at-large and 6,454 branch delegates from 628 branches attending the convention. All 50 states and three other jurisdictions have sent delegates.

Rolando then invited the chairman of the Band Committee, Charles Sexton of St. Louis Branch 343, to the stage. Sexton introduced fellow committee member Ernest Phillips of Cleveland, OH Branch 40 and then gave his committee's report. Funds from the Letter Carrier Band Fund are to be distributed to the three bands performing at the convention:

Salt Lake City—\$48,867.59

Pittsburgh—\$39,307.58

St. Louis—\$20,893.38

The delegates then considered a motion from the floor calling for an expression of no confidence in Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe, which passed.

After a few announcements, Rolando recessed the convention at four minutes before 3 p.m.



**MDA's 2012 Goodwill Ambassador Bryson Foster observes as President Rolando picks a winner for the Harley-Davidson motorcycle at the MDA reception held Wednesday night.**



## NALC AUXILIARY WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

**W**elcoming music was performed by the NALC Salt Lake City, UT band, Steve Talbot, director and Allan Cook, conductor, as delegates entered the Wednesday session. President Kirby reconvened the meeting at 9 a.m.

President Kirby called NALC Political Director

Tucker McDonald to the podium. McDonald thanked the Auxiliary for its support in the legislative area and stressed the vital importance each and every volunteer will play in the upcoming elections. McDonald went on to explain why candidates are endorsed, saying, "We support those who support us."

Door-to-door campaigning will be a key component of the 2012 elections, as it is predicted to be a close race. McDonald again stressed the need for everyone to get involved in some way to help save the Postal Service.

Discussion took place on the many ways board members have cut

expenses over the course of the last 4-6 years.

We-Care We-Share awards were presented to those who have given at least \$50 each of the last two years to COLCPE. Delegates were reminded of the importance of contributions to COLCPE through the Auxiliary to further show the level of support for carriers in the political arena.

The names of Auxiliary members of Carrier Corps were read by Vice President Cynthia Lang. A complete listing will appear in an upcoming issue of *The Postal Record*.

An election was held for the position of Assistant Secretary. George Anna Myers (Auxiliary 4, Kansas City, MO) was elected.

The meeting was recessed at 10:40 a.m. The Auxiliary sponsored a fun river cruise luncheon aboard the Betsy Northrup (photos appear at left).

**M. MARIE RASMUSSEN,  
NALCA SECRETARY**

