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BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C.
"THE WASATCH BRANCH"

Pavement Pounder

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March 2022

Publication 2022.3

*You and one guest are cordially invited to the annual
Branch 111 N.A.L.C.*

Retiree's Dinner

Thursday, April 28, 2022

3:30 to 5:30 P.M.

Chuck - a - Rama

12344 S. Minuteman Drive

Draper

Save the Date.

The President's Report

Things Go Better With COLA

If you've been to a gas pump, a grocery store, or a restaurant recently, you might have noticed something different. I went to a certain fast-food chain recently and found that my \$5.65 lunch (that I have purchased at that price for years) suddenly went up to \$7.99 (a 29% increase). The restaurant must have had a few complaints, because the next time I went, the lunch was \$7.29, which is still nearly a 23% increase from their old price. As I write this article, the average price for regular gasoline in Utah stands at \$4.35, up more than a dollar per gallon from a month and a half ago. And if you fill up your grocery cart, you might need to start looking at financing. The bottom line is that inflation is here, and it looks like it will be here for a while.

So what causes inflation? Sadly, the experts cannot agree exactly on the why, but some root causes could be supply chain problems, increased consumer spending, decreased production, or increased money creation. All of these have taken place in the last year in America. Whatever the cause, if the money you make this week will not buy the same amount of groceries and gas that you could buy last week, you are experiencing inflation, and in the U.S.A., we are experiencing inflation the likes of which we haven't seen since the early 1980's.

The good news is that the NALC has secured uncapped COLAs (Cost of Living Adjustments) in the current contract, which has protected our buying power. The first COLA of the contract (2-29-20) was \$166 per year/8 cents an hour. The second COLA (8-29-20) was \$188 per year/9 cents an hour. The third COLA (2-27-21) was \$416 per year/20 cents an hour. The fourth COLA (8-28-21) was \$1,934 per year/93 cents an hour. The fifth COLA (2-26-22) was \$1,331 per year/64 cents an hour. And there will still be two more COLAs, one in August/September of this year, and another in February/March of next year, and they will no doubt be high (at least based on how things are going now). The CCAs do not get COLAs, rather they get a 1% increase per year, which clearly has not equaled the rising inflation, but they do get the COLA benefit when they convert to regular.

COLAs protect our buying power. I have said for years that it doesn't matter how much money you make if your money won't buy the same amount of gas and groceries this week as it would have last week. Most jobs do not have the protection of COLAs, but the NALC has worked extremely hard to procure this protective benefit for us, and I have no doubt that we will also obtain it in our next contract.

A topped out Regular Carrier now makes over \$71,000 per year, and by the end of the contract that amount could easily be close to \$74,000 per year. And that amount doesn't even include overtime.

I am so grateful that our National Officers had the foresight and were provident enough to secure this great benefit for us. While many lament the horrible inflation we are now seeing, Letter Carriers can be secure in the knowledge that our buying power endures.

Michael Wahlquist – President

Branch 111, NALC

Take a moment to celebrate Postal Reform

H.R.3076 - Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 passed in the House of Representatives in February and the Senate on Mach 8, 2022 and awaits the signature of the President of the United States to become the law of the land.

“The legislation, which was led in the Senate by Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH), reflects a broad bipartisan consensus that is supported by the four postal unions, the mailing industry and Postal Service management.”

The NALC website announced that carriers should take the time to thank our Senators for their support in passing H.R. 3076. In my excitement of postal reform passing the legislative process, I went to send glowing thank you messages to my Senators. What I discovered was neither of Utah's Senators voted yes on this bill but in fact both Senators voted no on the bill.

With a vote of 79-19 in favor of H.R. 3076 it was disappointing to find that neither Utah Senator was in support of postal reform. I had assumed that I would find the same lack of support for the bill from the four members that represent Utah in the House of Representatives, however, to my delight I discovered that all four had voted yes on H.R. 3076.

I personally took a moment to celebrate the end of the prefunded retirement requirement, that has been the source of a false narrative of financial failure at the post office.

A big thanks to Phillip Rodriquez and Chad Mortensen for their years of work on postal reform.

PREAMBLE

This Agreement (referred to as the 2019 National Agreement) is entered into by and between the United States Postal Service (hereinafter referred to as the “Employer”) and the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO (hereinafter referred to as the “Union”). The Agreement is effective as of September 20, 2019 unless otherwise provided.

At first this may appear to be the standard opening to any document one comes across in life. In these words I find the very heart and soul of being a member of a labor union. The first two words set the nature of being a Union member. There is “This Agreement”, these two words set the stage for the rest of the contract. We have agreed upon our working conditions.

In this case the two parties are the United States Postal Service (Employer) and the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO (Union). Most of us refer to the United States Postal Service (Employer) as our supervisor or management. Regardless of what term is used both parties have agreed to work under “This Agreement”.

It may seem obvious and overly simple to make this point but in fact both parties have agreed to work following the “This Agreement”. The matter of trying to point at the Union or the Employer as two groups at odds with each other is not found in the term “This Agreement”.

This is not to say that there are not individuals that not only don’t know what “This Agreement” means but seem to take the perspective that “This Agreement” equals “How I think things should be done”. This perspective of “How I think things should be done” is the cause of needless hours of stress, conflict, and for many, a miserable work experience.

There never is a perfect solution to every possible scenario that plays out on a daily basis on the work room floor or out on the route but there is clarity that both the “Employer” and the “Union” have a standing agreement on how things are to be done. In fact, when it is not clear what needs to happen there is the Joint Contract Administration manual (JCAM), which has a good library of common misunderstanding and conflicts and their resolutions. There is also the grievance process when there is not clarity found in a matter that may arise, and yes, pure disregard of the rights of carriers.

Take some time to use the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) website search engine to find volumes of information about “The Agreement” and get the most out of your Union membership.

NALC BRANCH 111

Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting

March 10, 2022

Convened at 6:38pm

The meeting was also broadcast over Zoom for those unable to attend in person.

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the February 2022 meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

The Letter Carrier's Food Drive is May 14, 2022. Information on registration and how to coordinate the drive was received from the region office.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

Lindsay Weber, Kevin Morales, Joseph Gonzales, Madalyn Jones, Jared Ho, Adrian Hussey, Abby Rivera, Adam Rowley, Angelie Anderton, Emily Hinckley, Austin Bowen, Gerasimos Tzakis, Wayne Greenhalgh, Gerardo Acosta, David Leu, Brendon Kelson, Jean Lee, Daniel Langton, Austin Bundy, Adam Ivory

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND by Josh Thibodeau – not present

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey • No Report

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS - Jimmy Fleming, not present

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen & Phil Rodriguez

- The Postal Reform bill passed the senate 79-19. All 4 of our House members voted for it. Both Senators voted against it. Mike Lee wanted to amend the bill to restrict any abortion drugs from being mailed. Mitt Romney wanted to mandate the USPS to use the cheapest method of delivery (union busting). He also wanted arbitrators to first consider the financial standing of the post office in all contract negotiations (no raises because the USPS is not allowed to make money).
- Currently there are bills to allow buy back of non-career time and windfall offset for retirees.
- Efforts to rename a post office after Barrie Frankland are ongoing. It will be tough. Only 2 post offices in Utah haven't been named already.
- Evan McMullin is running against Mike Lee. Chad is trying to get him to come talk to us. • **The Republican primary is June 28th.**
- Becky Edwards, a Republican, supports union principles. • Generally, the one getting the most money, wins. We need to donate to LCPF. It is making a difference. Get involved. Wear your union shirts. • Karen Maynes says she is doing well after her surgery. "She is still as fisty as ever."

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

They met Tuesday. Everything was good. An issue with Winzip was cleared up (purchased without completing a warrant).

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

• A carrier, who is a disabled veteran, needed surgery for his disability. He would have gotten Wounded Warrior benefits. The problems is it only pays up to 104 hours of benefits. Injured vets still need to sign up for OWCP to pay for anything more than 104 hours. Call Bob for further details.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

• He has some historical documents that he is adding to the branch's historical files. Family coverage in 1960 was \$5.62 and self-coverage was \$1.61. The union has always come through for us, we have never had a wage loss. Benefits are good also.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist – not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist – not present

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

• OPM is going to two factor authentication for their website. It will make the system more secure. • Postal reform will affect retirees by automatically enrolling all employees in part A, B, & D when you turn 65. It will save members money in the long run by keeping health benefit costs down. Many retirees have opted to not have Medicare coverage. This will require them have Medicare when this takes effect. It will place the post office in a much better position. • **The Democratic party caucus is March 22nd**. Find out if your county is going to be in person or virtual.

June 28th is the Republican primary.

This year the **Retiree Dinner is April 28th** from 3:30 to 5:30pm at the Draper Chuck-a-Rama. Retiree and a guest are free.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

• The State Assoc. gave us \$401 last month, and we gave the AFL-CIO food bank \$802. We paid AFL-CIO dues of \$7,500. Payroll was \$15,019. We brought in \$36.71 more than we spent. • For safety reasons, \$40,000 was moved from checking to savings, so it can't be accessed by credit cards (or fraud).

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo - no report

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

• 400+ grievances filed so far this year. • Sandy is getting more, desperately needed, CCAs. • The pandemics seems to be lessening but the discipline is getting more.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

• We can now vote quickly on Zoom using a poll application. • **The Steak Fry is Aug 20th at 6:00pm.** It is in Pavilion #5 at the Murray Park. The cost is \$10 and you can bring one adult guest. • The Summer Party will be the end of June or beginning of July. We are waiting for approval of a location with a pool.

SPECIAL ORDERS:

• **The Grace Carrol Rocky Mountain Labor School (the last one in the nation) is April 10-15** at the University of Utah. Classes will teach how unions do grievances, budget, keep books, negotiate contracts, do social media, team building, and more. You get to learn how other unions work and what they are going through. Room and board are provided. We have budgeted to send 2 members. **Submit your name to President Wahlquist if you would like to attend.** Spencer Heinz and Amie Gallo have submitted their names so far.

• A motion was made by Jeremy Bailey to donate an additional \$500 to the AFL-CIO Food Bank in the name of Karen Mayne. This was previously presented at the Executive Board Meeting. The motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:53 pm

- \$25 drawing winners: Brent Console & Chad Mortensen
- RETIREES – \$200 (Keith Warner was the Winner). Next month it will be \$25
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$175 (Ronald Wasescha was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$200
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$75 (Tracie Butler was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$100



LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are donating so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law.

Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.

Letter Carrier Political Fund

H.R.3076 - Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 didn't just happen. Years of forging relations with legislators, regardless of party, that are pro-postal carriers took time and money. A harsh reality of politics is getting attention from legislators. NALC has recognized the need for this attention and has organized to get this attention from lawmakers.

I have been part of a lobbying group and have seen the efforts we put forward are not only professional and respected, but the NALC seeks out people that are the best in the business in dealing with both parties and working to get our message out there. All of this requires time and money.

All professional organizations in the United States have lobbyists. I want there to be professional lobbyists working for my profession and to protect my future as a letter carrier. I gladly give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. I hope you will take sometime to research and find out how effective your dollars are being used and will be used to have a voice in our professional working conditions and the future of our profession.

As a member of the NALC, there are several easy ways to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund:

- 1 **Payroll deduction:** Contribute automatically, using PostalEase (either [online](#) or by [phone](#)) to set up an allotment deduction from your USPS paycheck.
- 2 **Direct bank withdrawal:** You can authorize the fund to withdraw a monthly electronic contribution directly from your personal checking account
3. **Annuity deduction:** Retired letter carriers can elect to give monthly via an automatic deduction from your monthly annuity.
4. **Family Member Contribution:** How immediate family members of NALC members contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using Electronic Fund Transfer or by making a One-Time contribution
5. **One-Time Letter Carrier Political Fund Contributions:** This form should be used to identify names and members making one-time contributions.

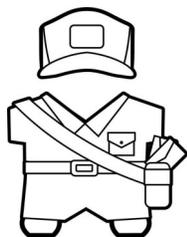
If you need help getting signed up, please contact NALC Headquarters at 202-662-2833 for assistance.

National Association of Letter Carriers
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The financial records of Branch 111 are available to anyone by appointment and a monthly record is always available at Branch 111 monthly meeting.

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EXC. VICE-Pres.

Mike Hansen

VICE-PRESIDENT

Amie B. Gallo

TREASURER

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