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

Pavement Pounder

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November 2022

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meetings and branch news.

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The President's Report

Peak Season

With Thanksgiving upon us, and Christmas coming soon after, I thought I would take a moment and just say "Thank You!" to all the Branch 111 Letter Carriers who are working so hard during the 2022 peak season. Though they might not say it or show it, you are bringing so much happiness to our million or so customers that we serve. Some of the letters and packages that you deliver this season will change lives. Thank you so much for doing such meaningful work.

While we normally work extra hours during peak season, this year will be more challenging than any we have faced. This is almost entirely caused by our staffing shortage. I wish I could tell you that our staffing problems would (or even could) be fixed in the near future, but as you all know, that will not be the case. Just remember that if you become too fatigued to continue on any given day, you should let your Supervisor know and go home. Your safety and health always come first.

I started with the Post Office back in 1987, and I have had the opportunity to carry mail through quite a few peak seasons. I think that one of the worst days I ever had working for the Post Office was on Christmas Eve in 1987. My manager had me out delivering mail for about 14 hours that day. Near the end of the night, when I was weary and irritable, I accidentally drove past a house that I couldn't see in the dark, and I missed a parcel delivery. Upset that I had missed the parcel and that I would now have to spend extra time back-tracking, I slammed my quarter-ton Jeep into reverse and started driving backwards in the direction of the missed delivery, hearing the engine whine as I accelerated. I suddenly came to my senses and thought, "What am I doing driving in reverse for all this distance?", and I hit my brakes... just in time to avoid hitting a parked truck which I could now see in my Jeep's rear window (which in those tiny Jeeps was about 5 feet from my face). I literally could see the bumper of the truck just inches away from the glass. I breathed a huge sigh of relief when I realized that in my haste and fatigue (and terrible judgement), I just about had an accident that would have made that night and the next day (Christmas) absolutely miserable, for myself, my family, the patrons on my route, not to mention my Supervisor and Station Manager who would have had to leave their Christmas Eve parties to come out and photograph the scene (of course since I was out that late, having them leave their warm houses to come out to my route might have made me a

little happier). I learned a valuable lesson that night, which was to stay calm while delivering and to not sacrifice safety for anything.

I have had many years to think about how Letter Carriers are a lot like Santa Claus. We both deliver presents. We both deliver on Christmas Eve. We both get a lot of cookies from our customers. We both know which of our customers are naughty or nice (in fact I think we probably know a bit more than Santa on that score). And we both get the blame when something doesn't show up. I hope that we can all remember to stay safe and remain calm during this peak holiday season. If you are struggling to do so, please do not hesitate to call me.

Michael Wahlquist
President
Branch 111, NALC



Uniforms Needed!

Please bring any uniforms you may have that you'd be willing to donate.

We accept any uniforms in new or used condition, but please none in bad condition.

Health Benefits

Jim Kerekes

I haven't received as of the writing of this article, my health booklets from the health plan for 2023 coverage. I'm not sure of what's in it yet. What they have sent me is an over-view booklet for all the options of the plan that we've had the last few years. What's really good is since the years from 2020 to 2022 the only change is that all the co-payments went from \$20.00 to \$25.00. As far as I can tell everything else stayed the same.

I'm going to hold an informational class on December 1st and December 8th at 5:30 pm at the union hall. It will be about the new NALC High Option Plan-Aetna Medicare Advantage. This will give all who are on Medicare more understanding about it.

Currently, the first information received about this new plan, a person wanting to opt-in this new plan has till December 13th 2022. But it is also written if you want to opt-in after December 13th you should do it as soon as possible. No matter which way it takes effect January 1st 2023.

If anyone during open season doesn't want to do any changes they will continue what they have and it will just continue through out 2023.

Always feel free to call.



People have always gathered to exchange ideas. Some of these gatherings were in homes, markets, government halls, and many other locations. Recent technology has allowed people to gather virtually. Branch 111 embarks on creating two such virtual gathering locations.

These gathering locations of the past have been instrumental in the spread and development of ideas and information. Many of these ideas and information have made life better for many. However, the opposite has also occurred where conflict and aggression have occurred.

Many stories of negative effects of social media can be found in the news. Many people have been harmed by these sites. But like in the past, what people bring to share is key to the amazing power sharing of ideas and information can bring to life.

There is great potential in using Instagram and Facebook for Branch 111. It can become a great resource for those with questions and a wonderful place to share opinions and voice concerns. I hope that Branch 111 can use these two new sites to create a more informed membership and motivate member to create a stronger union.

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
November 10, 2022

Convened at 6:32 pm

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

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Moment of Silence for Dennis Bramble, David Cracroft and Keith (Rusty) Guernsey, who have passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

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

Reading of the Communications – Steve McNees

- National sent notice of the NALC Advanced Formal A and Beyond Training Sessions held in Maryland. The next classes are Jan. 7-13, 2023 and Feb. 4-10, 2023. There will be 2 fall classes in Sept. and Oct. 2023.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

- Julia Garcia, Melanie Smith, Thomas Moza, John Enciso, Alejandro Ruiz, Robert Yglesias, Betty Knowlden, Zachary Thorne, Alisha Bultez, Ryan Jones, Miranda Rankin, Stanlynn Bartley, Vincent Williams, Jose Aceves, Kenneth Richins, Anthony Farias

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND by Josh Thibodeau – excused

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey

- Last week at Regional Rap Session we raised over \$5,000 for MDA. Four other branches at Rap Session brought the total raised to over \$10,000. So far this year, the branch has raised over \$9,600 for MDA.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS - Jimmy Fleming

- Tomorrow is Veterans Day. Call/email Jimmy if you or a friend have questions about VA benefits.

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- Branch 111 is being recognized politically as an entity that people want to help us and get our support. The USPS is the most trusted federal agency. • Last week was the Utah Legislative Gun Shoot. The NALC was represented by Dee Frankland (president of a Washington state branch) who came to represent our union (because rap session was at the same time). She had never shot a gun before, but came to learn more about what is going on legislatively. She, Rep. Jim Dunnigan, Rep. Handy, and Chad took third place. Next year we will try to have more teams.

- **This year a bill is being introduced in Utah that will prohibit companies from deducting union dues automatically from employees pay checks.** This is union busting legislation that we will have to fight this year.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- The Trustees will meet Dec. 6th at 5:30pm.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

- Thanks to members in our branch who are helping injured carriers get their compensation forms filed properly rather than leaving it to management to do (many errors and omissions). If you don't complete your forms on line a manager will do it for you using your paper forms. In one case Bob helped fix errors where a manager turned in a paper CA-1 form and the staff who entered the form digitally got the name backwards and the date of injury wrong. • It is very important for every carrier to get registered with OWCP so they can quickly record an injury (even while still on the route) and get medical treatment immediately. • It is winter, be careful.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- Open season start Monday and ends Dec. 12th. Any changes have to be turned in before 10pm on the 12th.
- For those on Medicare: Medicare part D is the government prescription plan. If you have Medicare and Part B, getting part D is double coverage and not needed. • For next year, NALC is offering a High Option Plan for annuitants - Aetna Medicare Advantage. You would still have to pay your NALC premiums. No additional charges for Aetna. Plus, there is a \$75 reduction, per person, each month for Part B premiums. It has unlimited physical, occupational, and speech therapy visits. Dental and vision needs more research. In the Aetna plan the medicine costs are about the same as NALC HB.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist – not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

- Blake Mellor was recognized as a new retiree and presented an NALC Retirement Watch.
- Tomorrow is Veterans Day. Veterans at the meeting were asked to stand and be recognized (about 12-14 stood, several more were on Zoom). • Please contact Jeff or the office if an active or retired member passes away. There is a lot of paperwork and benefits available that we can help their families with. • The NALC prescription plan is equivalent to or better (pays more) than the Medicare Part D option.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen –

Last month's financial activity was available to all attending the meeting. Last month: Income was \$26,370, Payroll was \$26,000.

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo – no report

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- 1,818 grievances have been filed so far this year.
- Mike and Amie Gallo have been scanning Step B grievance files so that they are easily accessible. They also filed thousands of grievance files over the last week.
- Buckle up and stay safe.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- Mike has had Covid for the last 2 weeks (3rd time). He thanked Mike Hansen and Amie Gallo for holding down the office and scanning and filing all the grievances. This was done while Justin Lindquist was laying new flooring in the branch office.
- It is the holiday season and we are way under staffed.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS:

- A motion was made: If your name is on the Steward of the Year Plaque and you go into management, your name will be removed from the plaque. A motion to amend was made: to just cover the name with a “void” sticker. The amendment to the motion failed. The original motion also failed.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:

The training at the Regional Rap Session was exceptional. We should try and send more people to the Rap Session in Coeur D'alene next year.

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE:

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:45 pm

- Drawings for 20 Turkeys (Costco gift cards): Kim Mortensen, Has Haslam, Mike Wahlquist, Bob Valdez, Eric Grotepas, Kirk McLaughlin, Alan Nagata, Mike Madsen, Robert Cottrell, Stormy Blood, Chad Mortensen, Gerald Maxfield, Jonny Johnson, Keith Warner, Courtney Chatterton, Marv Jewell, Steve Warren, Tim Gallo, Phil Rodriguez, Bill Craig.
- \$25 drawing winners were Amie Gallo and Destiney Carrillo
- RETIREES – \$200 (4,15 Timothy Martinez was not present). Next month it will be \$225
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$375 (2,40 Melinda Bird was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$400
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$275 (15,34 David Polster was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$300

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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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