

BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C. “THE WASATCH BRANCH”

www.branch111.com

Pavement Pounder



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March 2024

Midvale - Millcreek - Murray - Northwest - Orem - Sandy - South Salt Lake - Sugarhouse - Tooele - West Jordan - West Valley

Mark Your Calendar

Follow Branch111 on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on events, meetings and branch news.



@NALCbranch111

April

Thursday 4th
Thursday 11th
Monday 14th-18th
Wednesday 24th

E-Board
Branch Meeting (Bingo)
Steward College (Year 4)
Steward Training

May

Thursday 2nd
Thursday 9th
Saturday 11th
Wednesday 15th

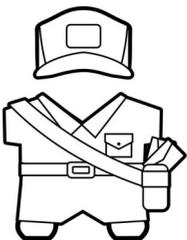
E-Board
Branch Meeting
Food Drive
Steward Training

June

Thursday 6th
Thursday 13th
Saturday 15th
Wednesday 26th

E-Board
Branch Meeting
Summer Party
Steward Training

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.

April 11th is BINGO! Night at the Union Meeting.

We are raising funds for MDA! There will be a game during the meeting and few following. Of course there will be “fabulous” prizes.

\$5 dollars per card and 5 cards for \$20 dollars.

Come have some fun and help MDA.

The President's Report

Committee of Presidents

On February 29th, I flew to Portland Oregon to take part in the very first Region Two Committee of Presidents. The NALC has held national level Committee of Presidents meetings for decades, and I even attended one back in 2009, but I found that it was mostly composed of complaining about things that we had already figured out, so I haven't attended another one since. But when National Business Agent Nick Vafiades announced that we were having one for the Presidents of Region Two, I thought that I had better go and check it out.

The meetings were held at the Heathman Lodge in Vancouver Washington, where we shared the lodge with another convention made up of members of the National Federation of the Blind from the state of Washington. The first day of the convention we went over the following issues:

The National Contract: The Arbitrator has been selected, but there have been no dates set yet. (Based on my own research arbitration takes about six months from the first date). Brian Renfroe says that the dates will be set "next week".

Training: The NBA's office is conducting Steward Colleges in all the states, with some states doing different years, so if a different year is needed, we can send a delegate to a different state's Steward College for them to obtain that year. Colleges will now start on Sunday in Utah (previously they started Monday morning).

Food Drive: Debbie Dixon is in charge of the food drive for the Regional Office, Amy Ellis is in charge of the food drive for Utah State, and Josh Jessop is in charge for Branch 111. We are currently figuring out if we can get the bags and cards sent out without any problems (before Branch 111 registers), as the G-10 labels can no longer be printed, so are not able to send bags and cards to offices the way we have in past years.

RAP Session: Union Officers will be attending in Sunriver Oregon this year, Washington State next year, and then Las Vegas in 2026. Las Vegas will be included because of the affordability, as we can get flights and rooms for about a third of the cost, which means that we can send about three times as many people.

District Safety: It is dead. It was never required by the contract, it was merely a test, and as far as the NBAs office knows it is no longer functional.

TIARAP: Carriers should still be filing 271-G (Requests for Special Inspection) if their routes are long. (The qualifications are: more than 30 minutes of overtime, at least 3 days a week, for any sequential 6 week period). Routes that have already been done in Branch 111 have not been reviewed yet to see if the adjustments are working, but the teams will now be focusing on those reviews. Teams will now be required to adjust in this order: 271-G requests, then reviews, then anything they haven't started yet. It is vital that Carriers put in for Special Inspections if they want their routes adjusted, there is no guarantee that it will happen any other way.

Uniforms: It is a nightmare. Uniforms are too expensive. Any Carrier who is having trouble getting uniforms needs to talk to their Shop Steward and get a grievance going. The NALC is proposing a "quartermaster" system, as is used by the military, to better clothe our Carriers.

The second day we discussed Article 8 issues for hours, which was probably more beneficial for the smaller branches. However, I feel the information we received on the first day was vital, and important for me to bring back to the members, and I will definitely be attending the Region Two Committee of Presidents next year.

**Michael Wahlquist – President
Branch 111, NALC**

CALL IT A COMEBACK

It has been a very difficult 5 years. The understaffing that we have faced has caused a long list of issues for letter carriers from all over the Branch. Unfortunately, for so many of our newer carriers this is all they know. High stress, little time with their families and unlimited overtime seem normal. As we begin to increase our staffing, newer carriers are going to experience a new problem. For those of us carriers that have been around for longer than 10 years know that overtime didn't always come so easy. We have all heard other carriers say "don't rely on overtime". It wasn't that long ago that 1 or 2 hours of overtime each day was a lucrative day. If you were lucky enough to be scheduled on your NS it was a bonus and penalty overtime was reserved for emergencies only. Over the last several years ODL lists shrank and medical restrictions increased to a point that the majority of some offices were restricted. Carriers were shamed by their fellow carriers for calling in sick and Union Stewards were ridiculed for not carrying their routes in order to perform union duties. I remember the days when sick calls and union time meant overtime for the ODL. Staffing is on the rise and the return of the PTF has caused ODL lists to grow and overtime to be sought after. It has been awhile but I will say it again, **don't rely on overtime**. Start restructuring your lives now to look at overtime as a bonus, not a necessity.

When I think about the years of understaffing I fear that they have caused carriers to adapt the way that they carry the mail. We have trained ourselves that the only way to make it home at a decent hour is to speed up, cut corners, work unsafely and sacrifice customer service. The newer carriers don't know any other way. When faced with a full route plus 3 or 4 hours extra, they had no other choice but to rush and cut corners. There will come a time when the extra 3 hours is not waiting for you when you finish your route. Management will expect you to maintain the pace that you have established on your route. Start changing your habits now. Slow Down, pay attention to the alert cards, maintain your CBU's, get out of the truck and deliver that blocked box, and go that extra mile for your customers. Those who have been around for a while know exactly what I am talking about and the smart ones never changed the way they deliver their routes. I don't have numbers but I guarantee accidents and customer complaints have gone through the roof in the last 5 years. It is not too late to start doing the job safely and with your customers in mind. Start today.

In Solidarity

Mike Hansen

Executive Vice President

Branch 111, NALC

Article 41.3.P

Article 41.3.P states, “The Employer shall promptly notify the local Union President of any job-related vehicle accidents involving city letter carriers.”

I’ve noticed that many of our supervisors and managers are not following this provision of the contract when carriers are in job-related auto accidents. But this is a very important provision for them to follow. They should contact our branch President promptly so that he can contact the local steward so that they can start their investigation. Or, if our President is needed, he can come and investigate as well.

More often than not, carriers are disciplined for some kind of alleged safety infraction after having an accident in the vehicle. When the union is not able to start their investigation promptly, we are left with management's investigation. If you are ever in an auto accident, please contact your steward as soon as possible. If management neglects their obligation to notify the Branch President, a grievance should be filed. This can also be used as a contention if a carrier is disciplined after having an accident in their postal vehicle.

Wishing you all a safe and wonderful Easter,

Destiney Carrillo

Vice President

Taking Care of YOU.

<https://www.nalc.org/news/the-postal-record/2023/december-2023/document/DHB.pdf>

The link above is rather lengthy but will lead to an article in The Postal Record, December 2023, titled *New Prescription Drug Plan for Medicare-eligible Retirees.* By Stephine Stewart.

In the midst of the March 14th, 2024 Union meeting a member provided some information about getting their prescription certified by a doctor and this leading to a very large reduction in cost.

While I have not had the time to visit with the carrier and gather more information it seems wise to me to spend a few hours a week researching information on my medical benefits. Sometimes I sit down and the information comes at me as if I am getting a drink of water from a fire hose.

I plan to spend a few hours a week on this from now on and to interact with my union resources to gain full understanding and benefit from my medical benefits. If you have the knowledge please share. I am sure such conversations on the floor will help take care of you.

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
March 14, 2024

Convened at 6:30 pm

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

Conducting: Mike Wahlquist, President

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the February 2024 union meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

- This year's steward college will be year four. It will be a new track on Contract Interpretation. Classes are from April 14th through April 18th.
- We received a proposal from Computech explaining services and monthly costs to move our grievance files and search engines to the cloud and provide full onsite and remote support.
- Letter from Katie Olson who is running for Salt Lake County Council, District 2. She says she is committed to supporting laborers across SL County. She is seeking the endorsement of our branch and looks forward to hearing the thoughts and concerns of our members.
- Branch President Wahlquist and SLC Postmaster Tony Cline have sent a request for a formal Area/Region level intervention in the 84103 zone. There is a backlog of hundreds of grievances for Articles 15, 17, and 31 violations. They feel the Informal Formal A process is broken.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

- Jeremy Thomas, Ezra Halstead, Alisha Parkin, Michael Jensen, Valery Vasquez, Mukonkole Ngoyi, Cayden Romero, Vu Vo, Ashley Rhoads, Trinita Bayton, Deborah Shenk, Robert Gillespie, Ray Gullickson, Shirlyn Ringlen, Jason Waggoner, Dan McCampbell, Roxy Lyon, Glenn Call, Emma Pinchak, Byerly Neilsen, Calese Bradry, Caleb Glad, Samuel Collett, Thomas Richards, Jacob Mangum, Darric Parker, Brandy Salisbury, Sophia Barber, Jose Ruelas, Tuli Andrew, Leah Afemata, Roman Starikov, Stephanie Pearce, Max Valerio, Valentino Jurisic, Bret Saksa, Landen Roberts, James Hunt, Zachary Oscarson, Kayla Stockham, Jonathan Feraco.

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND (LCPF) by Josh Thibodeau – not present

MDA COORDINATOR by Nathan Chester

- Recommendations to play bingo during (maybe) and after union meeting starting next month. Cards are \$5 each (5 for \$20). There will be prizes for the winners. If everyone enjoys themselves, it might become a regular activity.
- We currently have \$3,000 in the MDA fund with a goal of \$10,000 this year.
- He is looking at having a casino or poker night in the future.

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS by Jimmy Fleming – no report

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- He is going to D.C. on the 19th to lobby our Senators and Representatives. They will be asking about the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (allow buyback of none career time for retirement).
- He talked to the IRS workers (quasi government) about their retirement. Their time as temporary employees is automatically applied to their retirement. Just not the USPS.
- The Letter Carrier Protection Act will empower Postal Inspectors to investigate and prosecute crimes against us.
- We, unions, are perceived as powerful by politicians. The more of us that contact our representatives the greater our voice is.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- Trustees met Tuesday. There was only one small issue on a pending charge. There weren't any missing warrants.

MBA / COMPENSATION, by Bob Jewell

- Due to personal problems, last month's Steward Training on OWCP and C.O.P. was cancelled. It will be held next Wednesday.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- Retirees should request the Silver Script handbook (1-833-272-9886, customer care) to find out what the rules are (over 100 pages long).
- April 1st is the beginning of the open season for the new health benefits plans.
- Information should be coming soon in the mail.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist

- 5 weeks since his last report. He may have missed signing up 2 or 3 new members in the last four new employee training classes (that is good!).

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist

- Supervisors don't know the rules and can be putting you in unsafe situations. If it is not safe – don't do it (it is your decision). Contact your steward.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

- There is a retiree drawing tonight (the amount is a secret).
- He was disappointed the last month on how few joined his “Text Thread”. It is a way for Jeff to get out information on activities, legislation we need to react to, and a heads up the day before meeting if there will be a surprise retiree only drawing.
- **If you have diabetes, you must have your doctor certify that the drugs you are taking are for diabetes. If you don’t you will be charged over \$400 per prescription (assumed as a diet drug). If you get it certified, you will only be charged about \$50 for a 3-month supply.**
- There will be a retiree drawing at the union picnic/swim party.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- The progress/permissive grievance remedy fund has received about \$67,000 in total. We have spent about \$8,000 so we have about \$59,000 left for training. \$14,966 came in this month.
- We had a net gain of \$27,377 this month.
- 34.8% of all federal income goes to pay interest on our national debt.

VICE PRESIDENT by Destiney Carrillo

- OWCP training next Wednesday for stewards. Congratulations to all the stewards and members running for steward this month.
- New stewards should go to steward training and get Destiney’s contact information for when you need help.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- 601 grievances so far this year.
- It’s union night at the Bees baseball game on August 10th. We will get 50 tickets. He has a post on Facebook (Branch111). Upcoming meetings, training, activities, and urgent information will be posted on the branch Facebook page (Branch111). Mike just got another order of Branch 111 swag (t-shirts, beanies, stickers). They will be posted for sale on Facebook also.
- The USPS HEAT training is supposed to be going on in every office, now - before it gets too hot. Make sure your office is having the training.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- The first Region Committee of President’s meeting was March 1-2. It was excellent training (better than nationals).
- 2 Rap Sessions from now they are planning to have the Rap Sessions in Las Vegas (it will save money). We would be able to afford sending a lot more stewards.
- Calendar: June 15th – Branch pool party (Murray Park). August 24 –steak fry at Murray Park Pavilion #5 at 6pm (food available till 7:30).
- We are trying to get the settled grievances all put in the cloud so that officers and stewards can access the files to work on grievances. We will talk about this in the future.
- The 3 zone is a mess because of grievances. A mutual request for an Area/Regional intervention has been made. Mike is working almost every day in the three zone to help Stormy Blood get the backlog of grievances met on and appealed.
- Managers don’t want to meet on 3 zone grievances. Management can’t force anyone to represent the USPS on grievances. This has been posted nationwide that managers shouldn’t take these positions. The next option is for the USPS to hire off the street to fill these management grievance handling positions.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS:

- Phil Rodriquez read a “Contract Campaign Resolution” that is being sent to all branches. It would require national to post all national resolutions on the national website, and post responses, changes and local union negotiating activities. They want to post on the national website what it is that we want to bargain for. Bargaining updates would also be posted. Members input would also be posted. A motion to support the resolution failed.
- Proposed Bylaws Change: Article 5, Section 10, Current Language: “There shall be four drawings for the amount of twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars at the regular Branch meeting immediately after the adjournment of the Branch meeting.” Proposed Change: The amount of each drawing will change to “**fifty (\$50) dollars.**” Vote next month.
- Proposed Bylaws Change: Article 5, Section 3, Current Language: “The regular Branch meeting shall start at 6:30 P.M. on the second (2nd) Thursday of each month.” Proposed Change: Start time will change to “**7:00 pm.**” Vote next month
- Proposed new standing order: Newly proposed credit cards – There shall be no more than 2 cards will be issued. Only the President and Executive Vice President will be authorized to use the cards. The card shall not be used for any personal charges. The card shall not be used to purchase fuel or services for any officer or member’s personal vehicle. The card shall not be used as a form of loan to any officer or member. Any mistaken use of the card by an officer must be reimbursed immediately upon discovery of the charge. All charges against the card must be accompanied by a receipt. The balance on the card must be paid in full at the end of each billing period. **Motion to postpone until the next meeting passed.**

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:

Veterans’ medical benefits are available locally. The PACT Act has expanded benefits. Information and assistance is available at va.gov – Enroll for free medical benefits for vets who served in certain times. Enroll and they will help you to determine what you may qualify for.

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 8:08 pm

\$25 drawing winners: Daniel DeHerrera and Kortnie Chatterton

RETIREES – \$375 (Teresa Fredsall was not present). Next month it will be \$400.

PROGRESSIVE A - \$775 (Cynthia Gilson was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$800.

PROGRESSIVE B - \$675 (Mike Hales was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$700.

Retiree Suprise Drawing of \$300 for those attending – winner: Bob Jewell

National Association of Letter Carriers
2261 South Redwood Road, Suite 14
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

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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.

President
Mike Wahlquist
Executive Vice-President
Mike Hansen
Vice-President
Destiney Carrillo
Treasurer
Mike Madsen
Secretary
Steve McNeas
Sergeant-at-Arms
Mike Simonsen
MBA & OWCP
Bob Jewell
(801)-244-0929
Editor
Steve Warren

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Branch 111 NALC
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“Wasatch Branch”

Phone (801) 973-6705

Fax (801) 973-6723

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES
Jeff Asay
(801)-597-2380

TRUSTEES
Chad Mortensen
Kirk McLaughlin
Kortnie Chatterton

L.C.P.F. Coordinator
Josh Thibodeau
Legislative
Chad Mortensen
Health Benefits
Jim Kerekes
(801)-557-6033
ORGANIZER
Justin Lindquist
Safety & Health
Justin Lindquist
Food Drive
Josh Jessop
MDA
Nathan Chester
Director of Veteran Affairs
Jimmy Fleming
veteransaffairs
@branch111.com