



Pavement Pounder

Branch 111 N.A.L.C.

Publication 2024.5

May 2024

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

Mark Your Calendar



SUMMER PARTY

Hamburgers, hot dogs, Ice cream, and
swimming
Free to branch members and their families
(INCLUDING GRANDKIDS)

Saturday, June 15th

6:15 pm - 8:15 pm

Murray Park Aquatic Center

5109 Murray Park Lane

June

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

E-Board
Branch Meeting
Summer Party
Steward Training

July

Thursday 11th
Wednesday 17th

Branch Meeting
Steward Training

August

Thursday 1st
4th - 9th
Thursday 8th
Wednesday 21st
Saturday 24th

E-Board
National Convention (Boston)
Branch Meeting (Tentative)
Steward Training
Steak Fry

“The Underappreciated Steward”

Many years ago, I performed the difficult task of telling a Carrier that we would be unable to save his job unless he immediately enrolled in drug-rehabilitation. This particular Carrier's Shop Steward was sitting at his side. The Shop Steward immediately volunteered to drive the Carrier to the clinic and ended up spending much of the night helping him out. Over the next several months, the Steward went out to this Carrier's house, spoke with his family members, and did everything possible to get this Carrier back on track and back to work. I have seen Shop Stewards go beyond the extra mile, performing health and welfare visits, taking Carriers to the hospital, and helping Carriers through horrible life crises.

What is a Shop Steward? Webster's states that he or she is: "A union member elected as the union representative of a shop or department in dealings with the management." True, but a Steward is also so much more than this. It has been my experience that a Steward is also a:

1. Negotiator
2. Mediator
3. Counselor
4. Defender
5. Advisor
6. Confidant
7. Appealer
8. Contract Interpreter
9. Guardian
10. And so much more...

Why do Stewards volunteer to do so much for their fellow Letter Carriers? Is it the extra pay that they receive? According to our current branch bylaws, a Shop Steward receives about \$80.00 per month in salary. If a Shop Steward attends the monthly branch training, giving up an entire night to study the contract, he or she can earn about \$50.00 more per month. So the question is whether \$130.00 per month is worth filing all the grievances, conducting all the investigations, dealing with all the problems, answering all the questions, learning all the contract answers, making all the phone calls, staying up at night thinking about issues, making all the deadlines, and helping all the people in a zone? My answer has been the same for the last 23 years. You will never get rich working for the Union. We just don't have the budget to pay what the job is worth. Much of the work done will never be recompensed. The answer, short and sweet, is that \$130.00 is much too little for the amount of work, stress, and anguish that our Shop Stewards go through.

So why do they do it? The answer must be because someone has to step up and fight for our collective rights. Sometimes it is just a matter of it being "your turn" to represent your fellow Carriers. Our ranks are full of Carriers who have been Stewards in the past. Our ranks are full of Car-

riers who will be Stewards in the future. Thank goodness for people who are willing to take up the fight for our collective rights. Without them we would be at the mercy of a corporation that only sees us as a number on a sheet of paper, or a resource to be used up and discarded.

I am grateful for every Shop Steward that ever stood up for me and fought for my rights, whether it was for me specifically, or when it was for the whole zone. Too often, being a Steward is a thankless job. Stewards go into the job knowing that there will be disagreements with management. And often they are surprised to find out how many disagreements they have with some of the Carriers. Too often I have heard Carriers disparaging or slandering the name of their Shop Steward, accusing them of not doing a good job, or much, much worse. Too often, I see good Stewards who fail to get the support that they need from the workroom floor. Sadly, some Stewards start asking themselves "why they do it" and can no longer find the answer. But I don't want to focus on the negative. Negativity has always been the least effective tool when something needs to be fixed. Instead, I want to ask everyone to support your local Shop Steward as much as possible. Please thank them when they help you. Please help them when they ask for your help. Please say everything positive that you can about your Stewards, knowing that people will work hard to live up to a good reputation. In short, if you haven't told your shop steward that you appreciate them lately, please take a moment to do so. Remember, someday it could be you who steps up and represents.

By the way, in case your supervisor hasn't told you this in a while...Thank you for carrying the nation's mail! Your work serves every American and helps keep us all in a job. By stepping up and working through the staffing problems that we have faced during the last 3 years, you have once again proven that Letter Carriers are the backbone of the United States Postal Service. Being sincerely thanked sort of feels good, doesn't it? Your local Shop Steward hasn't forgotten you, please don't forget him or her.

Mike Wahlquist

Branch President

Let's Stick Together

Over the last several months I have been watching social media closely. There are several NALC/Post Office related Facebook pages out there. Maybe you follow some of them. The level of divisiveness I have witnessed concerns me greatly. Between the contract negotiations moving at a snail's pace and the recent charges being filed against President Renfroe there is much being talked about. It seems that there are two groups of members that are very active on Facebook. One group of Union members who trust the process and support that process. The other group of members are very frustrated with the way the contract negotiations have been handled and the way the charges against President Renfroe turned out. Both groups have hundreds of members that are very vocal on Facebook about their opinions. I fear that these posts and threads are doing far more damage to our Union than the issues they are arguing about. It wasn't very long ago that the Facebook conversations were productive and occasionally an internet troll would chime in but they were quickly met by unified members who shut it down. Now the comments go on for miles and members are attacking each other at every turn for their views on these topics. I feel like the divide is growing and more damage is being done. With the National Convention less than three months away, it is worrisome to think about what happens when these two groups are all in the same room and are discussing some of the most difficult topics in our history. I have seen some of our own Branch 111 members engage in these threads and I myself have even commented once or twice defending our Business Agent. I have my own opinions on the topics and sometimes they land on both sides of the fence. I won't be sharing those opinions on this platform and I certainly won't be sharing them on Facebook.

All I ask is that when you find yourself wanting to comment on a hurtful post, please think before you comment. We are all on the same team and it is important that we stick together. I am not even saying that one opinion or the other is the right opinion, I just know that fueling the fire helps no one.

In Solidarity

Mike Hansen

Executive Vice President

Branch 111, NALC

What the Truck?

An often overlooked but extremely important subject regarding a carrier's safety is the vehicles we use. Just recently in my office, a door fell off an LLV. Also, an axle broke in the middle of a highway. I personally have had the front wheel fall off in the middle of a U-turn. I've also had to pull a fuse to get the starter to stop cranking with smoke billowing out. These trucks lose power steering or brakes suddenly fail. They catch on fire at alarming rates. They are ancient and have been abused and worked hard.

We regularly spend 7-10 hours each day depending on these vehicles to transport the mail and us safely. Occasionally I have needed to use a different vehicle other than the one assigned to my route. Most times, I'm surprised that a carrier would work in that vehicle. Some are disgustingly dirty. Some have seats that have no cushion left. Some have e brakes that don't work. Some have heaters that don't work. Many have shoulder belts that don't work properly. The list goes on.

I encourage all carriers to take their safety seriously and demand a safe and comfortable environment (as much as possible in these old trucks) and write up every thing that doesn't seem right. Well maintained vehicles will keep you safer and help you avoid accidents and injuries. The VMF mechanics are doing their best to fix these vehicles, but they rarely thoroughly inspect the vehicles. If you are being asked to deliver in a vehicle that is unsafe, see your shop steward and fill out a workplace hazard form. Make sure unsafe vehicles are red tagged so others won't be put in an unsafe situation.

Our vehicles used to be taken down to the shop twice a year for oil changes, new tires, alignments and very thorough inspections. I have been informed that this is no longer the case. They will now be given this treatment only once a year. They are going to add two on-site inspections at the stations, but the items that they are looking for are things like mirrors, tire wear, lights, etc. that we already have on our daily checklists.

They are attempting to save money by doing less preventative maintenance and focus on needed repairs. Needed repairs means stranded carriers in potentially unsafe conditions. Needed repairs means trucks breaking down on busy roads.

We are given time each morning to do detailed vehicle checks. Use that time to ensure that you go home in the same condition you came to work in. Partner up with another carrier to make sure that vehicle will keep you safe throughout the day. Write up any defects or concerns. If it isn't addressed, write it up again. Tell your steward, fill out a hazard form. Make your safety a priority.

Yours in solidarity,

Nathan Chester

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
May 9, 2024
Convened at 6:33 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

Moment of Silence: Joe Wood and Jeremy Compton who passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

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

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

- The training meeting with Area Management, Region 2 NBA, and our branch has been rescheduled from April 29th to May 20th.
- The contract with Computech to create and maintain cloud storage and access for our grievance files has been signed.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

• Courtney Wonder, Simon Pope, Mukhtaar Kulow, Kelly Morris-Matthiesen, Keegon Lund, Colby Roberts, Bryce Jensen, Ryan Fraser, Tanner Hunt, Michayl Chantry, Troy St. Clair, Jackson Sparkman, Jennifer MaiSano, Phyllis Bradford, Christopher Timm, Shawn Howard, Christopher Cleveland, Travis Irvine, Chambry Beaumont, Daniel Sanchez, Brittany Poe, Vincent Montoya, Chanoi Yang

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

MDA COORDINATOR by Nathan Chester – not present

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS by Jimmy Fleming – no report

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- The branch has reached out to many who want to speak to the members of the branch. We also want them to become more labor friendly and find out about us. They talk to these people so that they can know we are interested in them. We want them as friends of labor as they may become high officials in the future. We can't give them money because of the Hatch Act, but they still want our support and endorsement.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- They met Tuesday and reviewed the March records. They were probably the cleanest and well put together. The MDA account is a separate account that only has money going into it and outgoing is to MDA only.

MBA / COMPENSATION, by Bob Jewell

- Steward training this month will be about CA-16s and how supervisors are supposed to get them. It will be on Zoom also.
- CA-2s have been done wrong lately because they are completed by the carrier only and submitted to management. Your time limits begin immediately this way. First, you should write your narrative of the injury and then go to the doctor and have them write their narrative. Then complete your CA-2 and then submit all the paperwork. Your time limit then begins. The chances of your claim being accepted goes up exponentially if you do it this way.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: Jacob (Jake) Fitisemanu is running for House District 30 (West Valley City). He is currently a Council member on the West Vally City Council. He supports collective bargaining and labor. He is a member of the Public Employees Assoc. He would like our support and endorsement. He agreed with our concerns when told of a few safety issues we have on the streets. He works in social services and community health during the day.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- He hasn't been able to find a complete list of the new Postal Health plans. By October or November, we should know what each option is and how much it will cost.
- NALC Silver Script reimburses \$600 of your yearly part B Medicare premiums. You can mail in a request form or go online to get your refund.
- Jim is doing about 11 orientations each week for new employee orientations, covering many/most offices in the state.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist

- We need to train newer (younger) potential stewards and officers to fill in as needed in the future. • There is also a need for more alternate stewards at this time.

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist

- The safety meeting was scheduled for today but management cancelled it. • Every office in the SLC installation is required to have water bottles. Stewards, let Justin know if you don't have them.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay • No report

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- In April we brought in \$2,500 in Progressive permissive grievance settlements, income was \$31,384, stewards were paid quarterly wages, and \$12,347 was paid for steward college last month. Total expenses for April were \$52,021. A deficit of \$20,637 for the month.

VICE PRESIDENT by Destiney Carrillo

- Wednesday is steward training. It will be in the big room upstairs with pizza and drinks.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen

- 1,058 grievances assigned so far this year. • The food drive is this Saturday. There weren't enough cards and bags for everyone. We need to get them delivered by tomorrow.

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- May 20-22 is scheduled for the intervention in the 3 zone. • The agreement for the online migration of grievances and membership was completed. They will be going up on the server in the next week or two. • Stewards and officers will have all the B Team decisions available on the cloud.

SPECIAL ORDERS:

- The Central Fed announced their annual Old Fashioned Labor Day Picnic and Car Show. The Executive Board discussed and recommended we spend \$350 to be a Bronze Sponsor of the picnic and car show. The branches' name would be on the backs of all the T-shirts at the picnic. The E-board recommendation was discussed and a vote taken. The motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

- Nominations for AFL-CIO Convention (previously nominated: Jim Kerekes, Kirk McLaughlin, Chad Mortensen, Mike Simonsen, Phil Rodriguez, Kim Mortenson). • Keith Warner and Daniel Langston were nominated tonight. It will be held at the Cultural Celebration Center just down the road.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Motion from the Executive Board to spend an additional \$10,000 to fund the National Convention delegates. This amount would come from the Progressive Permissive Grievance training fund. This still won't be enough to fully fund the delegates. The motion passed.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:

- Memorial Day – Car Show, food truck, and a ceremony at 11:00am honoring veterans at the Veterans Memorial Park n West Jordan.
- The Branch Summer Party is June 15th at Murray Park.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:47 pm

- ☐ \$25 drawing winners: Shane Johnson and Josh Thibodeau
- ☐ RETIREES – \$425 (Sherrie Mehl was not present). Next month it will be \$450.
- ☐ PROGRESSIVE A - \$825 (Lance Henrie was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$850.
- ☐ PROGRESSIVE B - \$725 (Joel Beyer was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$750.

Steward College 2024

The annual Utah state Steward's College was held at Daniel's Summit Lodge in Heber again this year. The classes were facilitated by Region 2 RGA Amie Gallo RAA James Frankford. NBA Nick Vafiades also came and addressed the attendees.

Approximately 20 stewards, from new alternates to veteran branch presidents, attended the training and represented branches from all over the state including Logan, Ogden, Cedar City, and St George. Steward College is split up into 4 separate years of classes, and the course material for year 4 of the college has recently been updated to Contract Interpretation which covers almost every chapter of the JCAM in depth. Trainees worked diligently after the full day of classroom instruction on group practice grievances. Branch 111 members made a strong impression on the Region 2 reps and showed both the expertise of our experienced stewards and the commitment to learning the contract from the less seasoned. All stewards who volunteered their time to better understand our collective bargaining agreement undoubtedly became aware of new ways to solve problems in their installations. They also learned to better defend our fellow carrier's rights under the contract. Perhaps just as valuable were the connections made amongst stewards from different offices who now know they have many friends to use as a resource to call up when they need some help or advice. I'll be looking forward to seeing some familiar (and new!) faces next year for Year 1!

Connor Lawrence, Shop Steward

Bountiful



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 tot hat contributor. Federal law requires us to use out best efforts to collect and report he 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 no to contribute.

National Association of Letter Carriers
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For up-to-date information on events, meetings and branch news,

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