



# Pavement Pounder

Publication 2024.6

June 2024

Branch 111 N.A.L.C. "The Wasatch Branch"

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

## Mark Your Calendar



### 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 (CANCELED)  
Steward Training  
Steak Fry

### September

Thursday 5th  
Thursday 12th  
Wednesday 18th

E-Board  
Branch Meeting  
Steward Training

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



@NALCbranch111

## The President's Report:

### The Heat Is On!

Whether you believe in global warming or not, hot weather seems to come early every year now. We officially had our first 100 degree day on June 13<sup>th</sup> in Salt Lake City. This article is not new, but the information contained within is vital for our members to have, so once again we will be talking about heat safety, and once again I will be starting off with a quote from "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge... my favorite poem:

*Water, water, every where,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, every where,  
Nor any drop to drink.*

In this famous poem, the crew of an ill-fated ship find themselves stuck in the "doldrums" (stuck on a still sea with no wind with which to move their vessel). They run out of water and are stuck baking in the hot sun for weeks until they finally succumb to dehydration and all drop dead (except for the narrator/protagonist who lives to tell the tale). If you haven't read it, it is not a "happy ending" poem, but rather a poem that seeks to teach a life lesson, or to warn of possible life-consequences, by the telling of a tragedy.

During the first 30 years of my career, I heard stand-up after stand-up where we were cautioned to avoid all symptoms of heat related illness. We were told that if we did feel any symptoms coming on, we were to immediately hydrate with water, seek shade or air-conditioning, and take an extra break (if necessary) for our safety and health. We were told to always make sure we had an adequate supply of water with us, and to drink copiously from it, and to dump some of it on our heads if we needed to. We were told that if we ran out of water, or found ourselves without sufficient water, to immediately take the steps necessary to obtain water.

In 2017, for the first time in my experience, we began to have some trouble between Craft and Management regarding the instructions about "water". There were many disputes, but the most serious concern was whether a Letter Carrier, who found themselves without water "for any reason", could obtain additional water. I do not need to go into the many reasons for which someone could find themselves without water, it has happened to me on several occasions, and I am sure it happens to all of us from time to time. The problem arose because management was giving bad (and potentially dangerous) instructions about water. Some members of management stated that Letter Carriers should never find themselves without water (presumably because they should always be prepared for any contingency), so getting water should never be an issue. I find that kind of logic to be disingenuous, naïve, and flawed, because running out of water does happen, and it will happen to everyone eventually. So, after several failed attempts to explain this to Management, and to get a definitive answer regarding whether a Carrier could deviate to obtain water when necessary, I was forced to write an open letter to the District Manager at that time (Darrell Stoke) which stated in part:

*"I have asked you and the numerous other EAS employees that I have encountered in the Downtown office to give the following instruction: "If you [Letter Carriers] find yourselves without water FOR ANY REASON, immediately procure water sufficient for your needs."...*

*... "Since management has declined to give this instruction, I find that I must get the word out, so this open letter will be published in our branch newsletter, and I am saying to all Letter Carriers, "If you [Letter Carriers] find yourselves without water FOR ANY REASON, immediately procure water sufficient for your needs." The Union will be happy to defend any Letter Carrier who is disciplined for procuring water when it is necessary for their safety."*

**After that letter, the Union resolved a grievance with the following language [in part]: "Any management employees that have told employees that they cannot have water will be instructed to cease and desist. Management will be told employees in the heat cannot be denied water."**

I have had numerous conversations with management about heat-safety, and potable water issues. Since the grievances and OSHA complaints of 2017, management and the Union have been in complete agreement regarding water. In the past,

- Management has stated that bottled water is being provided in all Salt Lake City Installation offices (and I believe all the Associate Offices are providing bottled water as well, please let me know if that stops being the case, or isn't the case).
- Management has stated that Carriers are being instructed to obtain water sufficient for their needs anytime they find themselves without water.
- Management has also stated that if anyone finds that they are having heat-related illness (for example, being unable to continue delivering due to heat-related symptoms), they should call 911, or call their Manager/Supervisor for assistance, whichever they deem expedient and appropriate. In the past,
- Management has agreed (regarding heat-related illness, heat stress, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke), that while every case is subjective, the Postal Service will make every effort to err on the side of caution, by calling 911, providing rides to the Hospital, or making sure Letter Carriers are checked out by medical professionals after having on-the-job heat-related illness (all of the aforementioned to be done when appropriate... every situation is unique).

***The bottom line is that both the Postal Service, and Letter Carriers should take Heat Safety seriously. It is my fervent hope that Management and Letter Carriers will use their best judgement in dealing with both heat and hydration. The hierarchy of importance is: Health, Family, and then Job.***

Remember, you won't have a job if you don't protect your health, and you won't want a job if you have to sacrifice your family to keep it.

It is expected that this will be a long, hot Summer. Water is good. Gatorade is good. Wet towels on the neck, wet hats, sweating, fans, shade, air-conditioning, and an extra break if necessary are all good. Please take care of your health this summer by taking the steps necessary to keep yourselves hydrated and not over-heated.

Thank you for protecting yourself during the summer to come, and please have a safe Summer!

Michael Wahlquist – President  
Branch 111, NALC

## Time to Kill the “Welcome Back”

Over the years we have all been asked to sign or participate in a “Welcome Back” or “Return to Work Checklist” after an unscheduled absence. These packets would come and go but would always resurface when a District Manager or MPOO would instruct our supervisors to resurrect the locally developed forms. If you haven't been asked to sign one of these, they are simply a packet consisting of language from section 513 of the ELM, a place to write comments, and a spot for your signature. Some carriers would sign them and move on and other carriers would refuse. Usually, supervisors were satisfied with either decision you made and they put the packet in a file somewhere and that was the end of it. These packets have been grieved many times for violations of the ASM and National Agreement. There is language that exists in some installations that says carriers don't have to sign these packets and that management cannot put them in your personal file. Unfortunately, this language was not enough to stop the packets from

## “It is time to kill the Welcome Back packet”

showing back up. Over the last year local management has started to use the packets in the way that we always knew they eventually would. The packets started making their way into S-2 packets (the request supervisors send to Labor for discipline). Supervisors were now citing the packets to try and strengthen their discipline of our carriers.

It is time to kill the Welcome Back packet in all of our Installations. Recently, in the Salt Lake Installation, Stormy Blood and Destiney Carrillo accomplished that feat. In late May we received two binding B-Team decisions for the Salt Lake Installation. The language reads as follows:

***This grievance is resolved:***

***The casefile, as presented, demonstrates a violation. Management is to immediately cease and desist the use of locally developed forms that have not been promulgated according to the ASM, and cease and desist violations of Articles 15, and 16.2 of the National Agreement. Letters of instruction and letters of Information or similar type missives are not appropriate and will be discontin-***

***ued immediately. The “return to Work Meeting,” “Postal Service Attendance Policies,” or similar type missives will immediately be purged from record, including notations of such forms from carriers ERMS records.***

***This is a huge win for the Salt Lake Installation*** and other Installations need to strike while the iron is hot. Stewards in our Associate Offices (AO) need to file grievances the next time management attempts to use these packets. It is fresh in the minds of our B-Team and I am confident that the AO's can get similar language. Killing the use of locally developed forms forever. Stewards, if you need copies of these decisions to help you in your grievances, please reach out. I do remind you that they are only binding in the Salt Lake Installation but they will be a great help. Congratulations to Stormy and Destiney on an amazing win.

In Solidarity  
Mike Hansen  
Executive Vice President  
Branch 111, NALC

NALC Health Benefit Plan  
Jimmy Kerekes

If you haven't already been reading or tuning into the information that has been put out about the **new PEHBP (Postal Employee Health Benefit Plan)** then here is a list of resources!

**The main website is:** [Keepingposted.org](https://www.keepingposted.org)

**Navigator Help Line:** 1-833-712-7742

**5 Part Educational Videos:** <https://www.keepingposted.org/pshb-videos.htm>

**For Retirees and about the Medicare questions you can also use:** [RetirementBenefits@usps.gov](mailto:RetirementBenefits@usps.gov)

There is still more detailed information to be sent to everyone. Once you get the list of Health Benefit Plans and details of options, coverage, premium costs, be sure to review it all. Even though you have had a plan for a while, you might find something new or maybe better coverage available for you. You may even see costs less than your current plan.

The special enrollment period of April to September 30 is halfway through. Many have gotten the forms or papers to fill out and return to sign-up for Part B.

I still need to review some things to make sure I understand the available information. After this first year set-up, things will (I hope) be smooth in Open Season 2025 for the 2026 coverage year. It may be that everyone will have new medical cards sent to them. There are many details yet to be sent, but I think they will not want to create any additional work for themselves. The Zoom meetings they have been having are found on the main Keepingposted.org site, and can possibly be reviewed. They show some slides that help you understand what to sign up for according to your age. I'll keep learning and sharing as much as I can. More coming in the next article.

## Editor's Letter:

### Ask the Experts

**A** generally accepted premise is that it takes a person about 10,000 hours of practice to become an expert. 10,000 hours is roughly 5 years of 40-hour weeks. It was at the 5-year mark when I really understood most of what it takes to be a carrier.

Members of the NALC have access to many experts. If you receive "corrective action", get hurt on the job, need retirement advice, have a question about safety procedures, or any number of job-related questions, the union has a guy for that. Ask your steward or Branch 111 officer for help. If they don't have the answer, they can find someone who does. There are experts in specialized areas who truly know almost every answer to any question or scenario..

Contrast that to your Supervisors, Managers, and Postmasters. These people are supposed to run multi-million-dollar operations in your office. They are supposed to be experts in payroll, OWCP, Customer Service, facilities maintenance, safety and health, HAZMAT, emergency procedures, human resources, and personal relations. They are supposed to have expertise in two or three different contracts with those different unions. They are meant to be experts in being clerks, custodians, letter carriers, rural carriers, and mail handlers. However, as the saying goes, **"a jack of all trades is a master of none"**.

I've worked with many Supervisors and Postmasters. I've dealt with several MPOO's and higher ups in various positions. I can't think of one who has a college degree in economics, business management, health and safety, logistics or human resources. Few of them have been very knowledgeable, but many haven't. With the recent trend of turning CCA's straight into Supervisors, it's likely very few people in EAS positions are experts. How many of your managers have more than 5 years focusing on only dealing with OWCP (injured workers)? The answer is zero.

Most of these people are just normal people trying to do a job. Some of them are very nice people. It's the system. Most of them are overwhelmed with emails, reports, and mandates of micromanaging higher ups. They have little to no training. They are frustrated and have few tools at their disposal. They don't have the ability to become experts. Incompetence reigns in many offices. **If you get injured, experience heat illness, have a family emergency, a payroll problem, or any of a long list of job-related issues, you'll want an expert.** You can roll the dice and trust that management will help and get it right. I suggest you ask the

experts. At the very least, double check with the union to make sure. The last thing you need if you are dealing with these issues is to have more problems because it wasn't handled correctly. Many carriers have had to deal with even more stress during stressful times due to management errors.

When management does things incorrectly, the Union routinely seeks and wins remedies that requires management to receive training on the area of deficiency. Your stewards and officers' focus are making su

Branch 111 carriers are properly cared for according to your contractual rights. I encourage you to use these resources. It's part of why you pay dues.

Yours in Solidarity,

Nathan Chester, Editor

### 22-Minute Load Time?

Recently management's hot topics have been one-hour office time and stationary events, but it has come up in other parts of the nation that management is also pushing a 22 minute load time. The 22-minute load time is a reference time used by the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP), in M-01983, to help route evaluation and adjustment teams (REATS) identify potential issues. The load time average is NOT a delivery standard and is based on a national average from years ago using a small sample size. Load times can vary significantly based on local conditions, mail mix, and route type. When I was on the COR team I would say it was rare to see a load time of 22 minutes or under. According to M-01983 on page 11, there is a 22-minute parameter that automatically gets flagged in DSR, this is because the evaluation teams need to verify the time to prevent anomalies. If management is giving an instruction to load your parcels in 22-minutes please request union time with your steward so they may grieve this improper instruction.

In Solidarity,

Destiney Carrillo

Vice President

Branch 111

Steward's Corner:

## Stationary Events!

Let's talk about stationary activity or stationary events! What is a stationary event? In a recent investigative interview, a supervisor answered this very question. A hard working, 12 hour ODL carrier was asked about having an 11 minute stationary event. When the supervisor was asked to clarify what exactly this means, the supervisor replied, "the scanner wasn't moving". Under threat of removal from the USPS, this carrier was asked why the scanner did not move for 11 minutes. This so-called stationary "event" happened four days before the investigative interview. Let's unpack this just a little bit.

First of all, there is no handbook or manual that we as letter carriers must follow that addresses or defines stationary events or activity. I have looked, the rules that apply to our duties are outlined in the M-41. Every city letter carrier case is required to have a binder that includes information on the route as well as a copy of the M-41. Read through and find the section on stationary activity, better yet, have your boss do it. Bottom line, it is not a part of our job duties.

Finally, if you are being questioned about **who, what, where, why or when**- ask for a steward!

Secondly, You are not required to know exactly what you are doing every second of every day, nor are you required to explain that or recall that when your boss asks you days later. Don't guess! If you don't know exactly if and why your scanner did not move for any given period of time, do not fill in the blanks! "Maybe I was" ...will most definitely be quoted in the discipline that is most certainly coming from this investigation. Management does not do an investigative interview for fun or for facts, this is all happening as a minor inconvenience on the way to issuing you a piece of discipline. If you do not know for a fact exactly what you were doing (like a vehicle breakdown or some other reasonable response) the perfect answer is, "my job" or "I was working" I always like "letter carrier duties" or "carrying my route". These are all completely acceptable.

Finally, if you are being questioned about **who**,

**what, where, why or when**- ask for a steward! Whether stationary activity or anything else! It's a good idea to take your own notes. Bring a notebook into the investigation and write down everything, it will keep you on track and keep your answers honest, yet brief. You will now have a second set of notes to match with your stewards, just in case the supervisor is not exactly accurate in their notes (it happens more than you know)! Brevity is important. "Yes, no, I don't know, I don't remember"- so long as it's true. When we start trying to explain everything away, that's when we get ourselves into trouble. Those are the things management will quote in the discipline.

Remember, scanner data cannot be the sole evidence in discipline. You are in the office to corroborate management's suspicions. Make them prove you broke a rule, that is their role in the disciplinary process. Always be truthful, but when you say something like "maybe my lunch ran over", you just corroborated that scanner data and gave them the evidence they need to issue discipline that might stick in your file! If they aren't going to wander over to your route to see what is going on, then they must not be too worried about what you are doing out there.

After an investigative interview, I always tell the carrier, you will probably be issued discipline. Please sign it, date it, notate the time with the date, make sure you get a copy, and text me (or physically walk over and hand me a copy). In other words, tell your steward immediately!

Please remember, you are a human, you are not required to be in motion every moment of every day, which is basically what the "scanner not moving" insinuates. Take care of yourself and your health, if you need to stop and cool down, please do, as often as you need. Thank you for all you do!

Kimberly Mortensen,

Chief Steward, Downtown

## WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or discharged, I request that my Union representative be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions."



**NALC BRANCH 111**  
**Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting**  
**June 13, 2024**

**Convened** at 6:35 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:** Charlie Iverson and Sidney Wade who passed away.

**Roll Call** by Steve McNees

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

**Reading of the Communications** by Steve McNees

- We received the Utah AFL-CIO Convention Call indicating that we are entitled to eight (8) delegates this year.
- We received Delegate Credential for eight branch members attending the Utah AFL-CIO Convention on June 28<sup>th</sup>. • We received notice from the West Valley City that we need to maintain a business license unless we are exempt (we are exempt).

**Application for Membership** by Mike Hansen

- Steven Baker, Kaafusuaga Unasa, Benjamin Wyman, Lindsay Johnson, Jan Aaron Montanares, Brandy Salisbury, Jade Swayne, Levano Miranda, Clarissa Brown, Kathryn Hirtzel, Cardin Lloyd, Daniel Chapman, Christian Stout, Zebulon Williams, Tyler Merrill, Kennedy Oliver, Keegan Arnold, Nicole Pasalagua, Gordon Russell, Shaun Del Toro, Gary Malmgren, William Waltman

**LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND (LCPF)** by Josh Thibodeau

- He has signed up some more carriers to donate to LCPF and waiting on postal record numbers for some new PTFs.

**MDA COORDINATOR** by Nathan Chester

- Nathan is having a drawing tonight for a 64-ounce Yeti water bottle with NALC logos on it. Drawing tickets are \$10 each with a maximum of 25 tickets being sold. • At the Branch Summer Party (it is free) this Saturday, he will have a cornhole tournament. He is proposing that whoever wins the tournament will be the 2024 Cornhole Champions and their office will receive donuts. MDA donations of \$20 per team to play.

**DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS** by Jimmy Fleming - no report

**LEGISLATIVE** by Chad Mortensen

- “Why do we as letter carriers concern ourselves with politics and who we are endorsing?” There are a lot of reasons. In the state of Utah, we have mayor and other races. They will have a say in many things that will affect us. Postmaster General DeJoy is trying to eliminate rural post offices and consolidate most others. This will hurt the state and the right politicians can help. Having a governor that supports the USPS and our needs is very important. • Chad is begging for our help to get involved with our local leaders because he can't be effectively involved with all the small cities and districts. • Karen Kwan is running for Karen Maynes district. She just wants to continue with what Karen Maynes was doing (that is good).

**TRUSTEES** by Chad Mortensen

- No meeting held last month. They will have one this month. • Anyone who wants to look at the branch books is welcome to do so.

**MBA / COMPENSATION**, by Bob Jewell - no report

**HEALTH BENEFITS** by Jim Kerekes

- Keepingposted.org is the main site for retirees. It has information and seminars about health benefits and other issues.

Navigator (coming soon) will have a phone number to contact if you have questions. Also [retirementbenefits@usps.gov](mailto:retirementbenefits@usps.gov) has information that is helpful. • If you are on Medicare, it is important to understand the four parts to Medicare. • OPM still hasn't set the rates for the new plans.

**ORGANIZER** by Justin Lindquist • He is still getting 8 to 10 out of every 10 he has in training to sign up. Those in the offices these new members go to, need to help them and then encourage them to join the union.

**SAFETY AND HEALTH** by Justin Lindquist Management just skipped having the second quarter safety meeting. Do they really care? • Everyone needs to make sure they have water and get the proper rest to avoid heat problems. • New employees in the last 6 months haven't dealt with the heat yet. We all need to watch out for and help them.

**DIRECTOR OF RETIREES** by Jeff Asay

The retirees will have a drawing for \$200 tonight. • There is a good article in the Postal Record this month about Enhanced Annuities. If you are a FERS employee and you had a significant amount of time on Wage Loss Compensation (over 2 months), you can apply for an Enhance Annuity even if you have already retired (see the Postal Record). Current employees should keep track of the time they are on compensation and apply for Enhance Annuity when they retire.

**TREASURER** by Mike Madsen Last month: income: \$31,460. Progressive/permissive remedies income of \$2,577. Total expenses were \$44,000 which was \$13,460 more than we brought in last month. • He is now keeping track of the grievance numbers that bring in progressive/permissive awards. We have \$52,700 in this account that hasn't been spent yet

**VICE PRESIDENT** by Destiney Carrillo Next week's steward training will be a PowerPoint on stationary events. A survey will be included, to be completed to indicate you attended. • The following week there will be a DRT training.

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT** by Mike Hansen • 1,534 grievances assigned so far this year. • The Summer Party is this Saturday. Bring your whole family. There will be food, swimming, drawings, and fun. • The AFL-CIO convention is June 28<sup>th</sup>. • Stationary Events: Supervisors are being told to complete a form 1564 (lunch and break locations) if carriers won't complete them. Management can't discipline based on scanner location but they are trying to do it. If you need to take a break because of heat, just do it. You can't be disciplined for a necessary heat break. If you are too hot, stop and cool off.

**PRESIDENT** by Mike Wahlquist

- It got hot fast this year. If you find that you are out of water for whatever reason, go get some. If you are having any of the heat symptoms, go find somewhere to cool down.

At the Summer party Saturday, it is supposed to be only 89 degrees. Bring your family (not extended). It is free. The pool is ours from 6:15 – 8:15.

**SPECIAL ORDERS:** • none

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** none

**NEW BUSINESS:** none

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:**

- Anyone wanting to put an interesting story in the Pavement Pounder should contact Nathan Chester.
- Motion to sponsor Jacob (Jake) Fitisemanu in the West Valley district. The motion passed.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION**

**DRAW AND ADJOURN** – 7:34 pm

- \$25 drawing winners: Fernando Palafox; Chris Sullivan
- RETIREES – \$450 (Dennis Despain was not present). Next month it will be \$475.
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$850 (14-1 Raymond Marlow was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$875.
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$750 (9-15 Russell Hatch was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$775.
- MDA drawing for a 64 oz Yeti thermos – Stormy Blood - \$230 collected for MDA tonight.



The Summer Party was a HIT! The "Three Mikes" were busy cooking dogs and burgers while Branch 111 partied in the pool.

We had a great turnout with many families showing up. The branch rented out the entire pool, and a great time was had by all.

Bob Jewell provided the dessert with his world class Dutch oven cobblers.

Many swam while others engaged in fun conversations, and others played cornhole.

If you didn't make it this year, come on down next year.

Also, the next event is the Steak Fry! Prizes, fun and food.



Help support MDA!

Branch 111 proudly supports the Muscular Dystrophy Association

We will be having a drawing for these AWESOME YETI 64 oz. jugs and 20 ounce tumblers. They are customized with the NALC Branch 111 artwork. The drawing will take place at the next Branch meeting.

The drawing is limited to the first 25 donations of \$10. This will guarantee you a 1 in 25 chance to win!

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

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**Keep on Delivering.**

## BRANCH 111 Officers

### President

Mike Wahlquist  
385-216-0476

### Executive Vice-President

Mike Hansen  
801-628-1848

### Vice-President

Destiney Carrillo  
562-370-3590

### Treasurer

Mike Madsen

### Secretary

Steve McNees

### Sergeant-at-Arms

Mike Simonsen

### MBA & OWCP

Bob Jewell  
801-244-0929

### Editor

Nathan Chester  
Natechester8@gmail.com

### Director of Retirees

Jeff Asay  
801-597-2380

### L.C.P.F. Coordinator

Josh Thibodeau

### Legislative

Chad Mortensen

### Health Benefits

Jim Kerekes  
801-557-6033

### Organizer

Justin Lindquist

### Safety & Health

Justin Lindquist  
801-301-1993

### Food Drive

Josh Jessop

### MDA

Nathan Chester

### Director of Veteran Affairs

Jimmy Fleming  
veteransaffairs@branch111.com

### Trustees

Chad Mortensen

## The Pavement Pounder

is the official publication of NALC Branch 111

**www.Branch111.com**

**Phone 801-973-6705**

**Fax 801-973-6723**

For up-to-date information on events, meetings and branch news,  
follow Branch 111 on Facebook @NALCbranch111

The Pavement Pounder would like to hear from you! If you would like to submit an article, write it and send to **Natechester8@gmail.com**. It will be reviewed and edited for publication if accepted.

July's theme is: DOGS. Tell us in a brief story about your favorite or worst dog story.