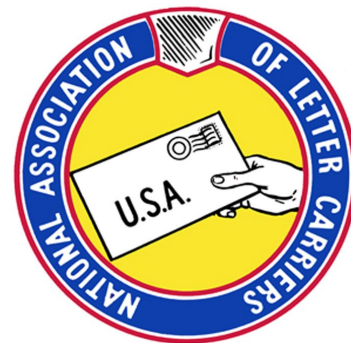


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BRANCH 111 N.A.L.C.
"THE WASATCH BRANCH"



Publication 2020.03

March 2020

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

Retiree's Dinner

Chuck-A-Rama
12344 Minuteman Dr, Draper
Wednesday, April 29th, 2020
3:30 until 5:30 P.M.
Retired member and 1 guest only please



The Branch 111 Union Meeting, March 12th, 2020, was cancelled in accordance with the Governor of Utah's ban on public gatherings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

All the business of that meeting will be covered and the next Union Meeting that happens after the ban is lifted.

The President's Report

The Flu and You

As I write this, President Trump has just declared the coronavirus a “National Emergency” and says that by doing so it will allow him to get \$50 billion to states, territories and localities in the fight against the disease. Utah Governor Herbert has limited all mass gatherings of healthy people to 100, and has said that people over age 60, or those with compromised health, should avoid any gathering of more than 20 people. Universities and some schools have already switched to online courses, or have closed temporarily, and it is expected that additional schools will follow. The NBA and the NHL have suspended their seasons, and Disneyland has closed its doors. And I won’t even get started on the Stock Market (though it did gain nearly 2000 points today!), or on how we may never see toilette paper, hand sanitizer, or bottled water in a brick-and-mortar store ever again.

With all of this going on, the biggest concern to our active and retired Letter Carriers is how the coronavirus will affect us and our families. The quick answer is that we really don’t know how this flu will behave, who will get it, and how severe it will be. We do understand that it seems to be far more severe for people over 60 years of age, and for people with underlying health conditions. I did some research about how the last major flu pandemic of this magnitude affected Letter Carriers (The Spanish Flu of 1918). In the Postal Record of March, 1919, Branch 791 of Everett Washington reported:

“Branch 791 managed to keep a solid front during the war and through the rampage of influenza. The carriers resisted the temptation of higher pay to be found outside the service and all stuck to the ‘old whip’. A few suffered from attacks of influenza, but no severe cases developed. Our force of sixteen regular carriers had working conditions fairly good and are hopeful that better things are to follow”

And the branch from Butler, PA reported in April of 1919:

“Our force was badly hit by the ‘flu’ epidemic and for more than three months patrons got used to seeing most anyone coming with their mail. During Christmas week we had four men sick and another one off on account of sickness in the family. This many from a force of thirteen with no regular substitutes certainly left us in a badly crippled condition. With our ammunition shops closed and the other industries of the city running slack, it looks as though the postal employee may get some one to think his position in the world worthwhile yet.”

So based on the historical accounts I could find (and there were many others), we can expect to have some periods of low staffing and much work, but we will pull together and make it through this unprecedented event (at least unprecedented in recent times).

So what can we do to minimize the effect of the coronavirus?

1. If you get the flu, stay home until you are well.
2. Do not congregate in large groups until flu season is over (see the Governor’s recommendations above)
3. Wash your hands frequently, and always after touching public surfaces.
4. Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes unless you have just washed your hands.
5. Buy all the toilette paper, hand sanitizer, and bottled water you can so that nobody else can get any. (This step is optional)

I spoke with the District Manager Michael Mirides today, and he stated masks and gloves should be available to Letter Carriers who need them, and the message that he is sending out to all district employees is to “be calm and communicate, get good information to your managers as soon as possible so that good decisions can be made”. I can’t find anything to disagree with in that statement. I know that there will be times in the near future where we may have low staffing, and perhaps management will have to make some tough decisions about which mail gets delivered. But the one thing I want to repeat is that if you are sick, please stay home and take care of yourself. If you have a family member who is sick and they need your care, please stay home and take care of them. Nothing is as important as taking care of your health or taking care of your family members’ health.

The ELM states:

“513.11 Sick Leave for Employee Incapacitation

Sick leave insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated for the performance of duties because of illness, injury, pregnancy and confinement, and medical (including dental or optical) examination or treatment.

513.12 Sick Leave for Dependent Care

A limited amount of sick leave may also be used to provide for the medical needs of a family member. Non-bargaining unit employees, and bargaining unit employees if provided in their national agreements, are allowed to take up to 80 hours of their accrued sick leave per leave year to give care or otherwise attend to a family member...”

Please make sure you take care of your own health first and foremost, and please don’t be the “hero” who comes to work sick and gets everyone else sick. And conversely, please don’t be the “hero” who freaks out if someone clears their throat at work, or who starts coughing at their case because they inhaled a crumb from their morning muffin. Let’s all be calm and reasonable as we face the challenges of the next few months and we will all try to make the best decisions possible!

Michael Wahlquist
President
Branch 111, NALC

A Matter of Arbitration

The Union is your representation and policer of The Contract in relation to disputes or interpretations of The Contract in relation to your daily work.

If you are a long time letter carrier and a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers you are probably aware of Arbitrations, however if you are rather new to the letter carrier craft you might be unaware of Arbitrations and many other things Union. I was asked to present the results of a recent Class Action Grievance between the United States Postal Service and National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL—CIO. (USPS Case No.:E16N4EC19291058 and/or NALC DRT No.: 02-471026)

As a Letter Carrier you work in conditions that are set up by the Contract. The Contract is agreed upon by both the United States Postal Service (The Employer) and the National Association of Letter Carriers (The Union). The key point here is that both parties have agreed to the conditions and rules of work. This is not a wish list of hopes that Carriers want from their supervisor, they are agreed upon by both groups. All the rules and concepts are written and openly available for all to read and know.

Of course in all things the rules are seen differently by different supervisors and carriers. As a carrier if you see a violation of the rules, you have the right to grieve (or simply say, “wait a minute I thought...”,) A shop steward is present on the floor or available to grieve your concern or explain the rule more clearly. (A tip from my experience, it is best to spend the time to learn the contract as well as you can for your own protection.)

This is not an article about the grievance process but when neither party can agree on the way they see things in relation to The Contract, an Arbitrator is brought in to hear both sides and resolve the issue.

On the opposite page you will find the results of a resent Arbitration in relation to our rights to have all the information being used against a carrier or for a carrier in relationship to a Union and Management dispute.

Very Short Summary

Very simply a carrier was charged with unacceptable conduct and as the case moved through the grievance steps and an information request was submitted for information as per Articles 3, 17, 31 and the Salt Lake Hamilton Memorandum. Management denied the request for information based on the idea that no discipline had been issued. About six pages later of detailed arguments of why the information should have been provided and arguments why the information did not have to be provided the following awards were granted by the Arbitrator.

Award Summary

This grievance involves the Service's failure to honor a request for information submitted by the Union. The Service contends it is only required to tender relevant material. The Union contends it was entitled to the requested information as a matter of right. The grievance is sustained in its entirety.

Glynis F. Gilder, Arbitrator

Award

Based on the foregoing facts, information and analysis, it is this arbitrator's decision the Service did violate Articles 17§3 and 31§3 of the National Agreement and the "Hamilton Letter" when it failed to honor the Union's request for information. The Service is directed to cease and desist all such violations of the above-referenced provisions of the National Agreement and local policies. The Service is also directed to pay the local Union branch the sum of Six hundred and No/100 dollars (\$600.00). This arbitrator retains jurisdiction in this matter for the limited purposes of correcting any error, resolving any ambiguity or to provide such other relief to which the parties may be entitled.

Glynis F. Gilder
Arbitrator

Please contact Mike Wahlquist at the Branch office if you wish to see the six pages of this Arbitration Panel and the cover letter or if you have any questions in relation to this settlement.



Automatic contributions can be set up on your Lite Blue account and if you have questions or need help setting up your contribution, please contact The Hall or your shop steward.

The reality of politics hit me a few years ago when I traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in lobbying efforts. The beginning of my realization occurred as we drove past a massive building full of lobbyists for home realtors. I became further aware as we walked the halls of congress and at every turn were groups of Veterans there to make their voices heard.

Despite many ideals of government it takes time and money to make your voice heard in Washington D.C.. The efforts of carriers from every State in the Union have given us great progress in having our issues heard in the Halls of Congress.

All other kinds of lobbies were present as well but so were people from all walks of life. Our voice will not be heard if we are not present in the offices of our representatives. To those who give, thank you and for those who don't, consider a small donation to the Letter Carrier Political Fund.

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 Carriers are from all kinds of political opinions and parties. Your voice is important in our continued service to the American people. The United States Post Office and her Letter Carriers are a great part of the American culture.

NALC HEALTH BENEFITS

Jimmy Kerekes

In all my years, I have never seen a sickness or a virus affect so many people and many other things. It is amazing to me a thing so small as this has such an impact. Small things can bring a great change. On a positive note, one person can bring a change in things.

Many of you already have heard what actions and precautions to take for the virus from trained medical professionals on tv news, etc. Much from the federal and state governments. If you are following their advice that is good.

Letter carriers are around many people on their routes and now maybe around more people since some people will work from home and children will be out of school.

I am not any medical expert, but an idea came to me. They say for flus and this virus don't touch your face. Not sure if it would help but maybe. Take a dry wash cloth to wipe your face if you need to touch it. Then put the cloth in a plastic zip-lock bag and use it all day and then the next day use another wash cloth. This would maybe help to not touch your face with bare hands.

Most of the time we use our shirt sleeves to cover a cough or sneeze. I also use that method to rub my eyes or take care of an itch I might have on my face. I can't believe how hard it is to be cautious enough all day long to keep my hands away from the parts of my face.

Good health to all of you in these times. It will be hard in the workplace for a letter carrier. In order to serve the American people, there is no working from home in that job. Take care of your health.

Hope we can meet in April.

Your Home Financing Resource

The Union Plus Mortgage Program provides:

- Special benefits for union members, their parents and children
- Educational tools to help you prepare for homeownership
- A wide range of financing option from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage



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The financial records of the Union are available to be looked at by any Branch 111 member, in the Union Office, by appointment.

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