

Pavement Pounder

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

Publication 2021.04

April 2021



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

UNION MEETING, Branch 111 May 13th , 2021, 6:30 pm

Go to zoom.us on your computer or download the Zoom app on your phone

Click Join a meeting

Enter Meeting ID 989 001 1306

Change your screen name to your name

Click "Join"

Password: branch111

UNIFORMS NEEDED

**Clean out your closets and help Branch 111 Carriers.
All sizes and items needed!**

Please drop off clean, good condition items to the
Union Hall or with your Steward.

For retirees: if you are unable to make it to the Union Hall, please call 801-973-6705 to make arrangements.

The President's Report

The Downtown Office is Moving

I carried mail in the Downtown Office in 1994-1995. One of the first things I was told when I reported to work there was that the building was old, and that the Post Office was looking to find (or build) a better facility. This was 27 years ago. Of course, the Post Office is one of the largest bureaucracies in existence, and as such good decisions are made rarely, and even then: slowly. It is hard to explain exactly what happened regarding the Downtown Office, as all the information I have is third or fourth hand, but apparently the building is to be torn down to make way for something bigger and better. So the lease that the USPS had is not being renewed, and the USPS has until the end of April to vacate the premises. Apparently, management has known for some time about this, but was not able to figure out a viable solution. So now they are going to move the entire downtown delivery operation over to the Annex (the building across the street from the Plant) in the next two weeks on a temporary/permanent basis. They are also looking to find temporary retail space out of which they can continue to serve their downtown customers.

So how did this happen? How did the Post Office get into a situation where they lost a building with no good way to functionally replace it? How did management not see this coming? The answer can be summed up in one word: Bureaucracy! Of course they saw it coming, of course there were managers who let their higher-ups know that they needed a new building (probably for the last 27 years), and of course they told the higher-ups that the lease wouldn't run forever. How did management fail to purchase one of the many downtown properties they could have had for cheap up until a few years ago? Nearly all of that property has been snapped up by investors or developers in the last few years, and fortunes have been made as the property increased in value.

It's hard to figure out who to blame, but it is clear that the person or persons who could have acted to prevent this situation either didn't listen or didn't care. Perhaps the petitioners were not loud enough, or perhaps those being petitioned thought they could always extend the lease, or "kick the can down the road" as they have done so many times before. The bottom line is that it really doesn't matter whose fault it is, the problem we now face is getting the entire Downtown delivery operation switched over to a building that was not designed for that.

New doors will be ordered and installed, vehicles will be moved, longer drive-times will be authorized, and overtime will go through the temporary roof. I expect there to be many unforeseen problems, as well as the foreseeable. Carriers who were around in the 1990s in Salt Lake City were treated to the book "Who moved my Cheese", a parable about adapting to change, which was read in every Station in the Salt Lake City Installation, and perhaps in the Associate Offices as well. Clearly our "cheese" is being moved now, and we will have to adapt to some pretty serious changes in the Downtown operation. But I have every confidence that things will work out, and that the mail will get delivered (albeit maybe a bit late for a while), and that we will come up with best solutions to the inevitable problems. Had the

USPS been proactive, these problems would be resolved already, but since they have chosen to be reactive, we will resolve them now.

One thing I should stress is that problems will always arise, some which we cause ourselves, many which are caused by others. And we should never sacrifice safety, or doing the job correctly, simply because there are “problems” in the operation. Management will occasionally try to make their problems into your problems (Okay, occasionally might be an understatement). You should never allow this to happen. As a Letter Carrier, our job is to safely deliver the mail to the right recipient or receptacle. If we lost a building due to management’s inability to see further than next week, or whether there are 8 sick calls in your Zone, it doesn’t change that our job is to safely deliver the mail effectively. If you haven’t heard it before, the expression to justify safe and effective delivery of mail is “It takes what it takes”, or in other words, it takes whatever time is necessary to do the job right, and we have a right to take whatever time is necessary to do the job right. Can management follow you if they disagree with your estimate? Of course they can, the contract gives them the right to observe Carriers in the performance of their duties. But that is also the chance for Carriers to prove that they are doing the job safely and effectively, therefore: “it takes what it takes”.

Please continue to be safe, Spring is here, Summer is coming, which means that kids, dogs, and teenage drivers will be out and about. I am hoping we will get Branch 111 functions going again, such as the Summer Picnic on June 26th, the Steak Fry on August 28th, and regular monthly Branch 111 Union Meetings down at the hall, but all of these are tentative as we are waiting for State, City, and County restrictions to be relaxed enough to do all of it. And even though the State Governor is relaxing mask requirements, the USPS is Federal, and mask requirements at the Post Office are continuing at this time. There is light at the end of the proverbial “tunnel” regarding Covid-19, so let’s finish it out strong.

Michael Wahlquist – President
Branch 111, NALC

NALC HEALTH BENEFITS Jimmy Kerekes

It’s good to know, locally, that we have an increase in our Health Benefit enrollment. The more the, membership, it is possible to have lower premiums. But usually that’s not the case.

With more conversions to regular status, the employee has more options available to choose from. At least 6-8 Health Plans each open season. Of course we would hope they choose the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

With so many hardships like the pandemic- it’s good to have a good Health Insurance Plan. People who were out of work or lost their jobs may have lost insurance coverage.

Everyday there are many opposites. Happy/ Sad, Good/Bad, Sick/ Health, etc. Be grateful for yourself and to others who help you or that you can help them. JOY- without burden of regretful thoughts or misery is mental guilt free- No Worries.

Glad we see daylight from the events of last year. Hope we learned some things to benefit us and others in the near future. Seek for service to others it brings great comfort to you.

Leave Without Pay

I have been approached by numerous carriers recently regarding Leave Without Pay (LWOP). I thought maybe it would be a good idea to clarify some things.

LWOP is generally at management's discretion (ELM 514.22). This means when you submit a request for LWOP, management does not automatically have to approve it. The exception to this is when your request for LWOP is associated with a FMLA protected absence. At that point, management has no option but to approve the request for FMLA. During the pandemic, management is also supposed to grant liberal LWOP for absences related to COVID 19.

For those that use LWOP, you should keep track of the hours you are using. Every time you hit an increment of 80 hours of LWOP, your leave credit will be deducted by the amount of leave earned in one pay period (ELM 514.24). This means if you earn six hours per pay period, you will lose six hours every time your LWOP total reaches an increment of 80 hours, i.e., 80, 160, 240, etc.

I have also been approached quite frequently about the maximum workhour limitations. This seems to be an issue in a lot of our stations and some confusion amongst carriers from different stations. The language is quite clear, Article 8.5.G (page 8-19 of the 2014 JCAM) states:

Maximum Hours—60 Hour Limit. *National Arbitrator Mittenenthal ruled in H4N-NA-C 21 "Fourth Issue," June 9, 1986 (C-06238) that the 12- and 60-hour limits are absolutes—a full-time employee may neither volunteer nor be required to work beyond those limits. Limitations regarding part-time employees are governed by the ELM Section 432.32 (See Maximum Hours-12 Hour Limit).*

These totals include any leave taken and any Holiday pay. M-00859, states in part:

As a means of facilitating the foregoing, the parties agree that excluding December, once a full-time employee reaches 20 hours of overtime within a service week, the employee is no longer available for any additional overtime work. Furthermore, the employee's tour of duty shall be terminated once he or she reaches the 60th hour of work, in accordance with Arbitrator Mittenenthal's National Level Arbitration Award on this issue, dated September 11, 1987, in case numbers H4N-NA-C 21 (3rd issue) and H4C-NA-C 27 (C-07323).

ELM 432.32 further clarifies:

Maximum Hours Allowed

Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the postmaster general (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled workhours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. Postmasters and exempt employees are excluded from these provisions.

Violations of the workhour limitations should be grieved. If you work beyond these limitations, speak to your steward, and ask for a grievance to be filed. Grievances such as this can be helpful down the line if we get to a point where we need to file a staffing grievance. Often, these repeated types of violations are due to a lack of sufficient staffing.

Take care and be safe!

Amie B. Gallo

Have I Done That?

A few months ago I touched on how important it is for us as Carriers to give our customers the very best service that we can. I wanted to revisit this topic because I am passionate about taking care of our customers and service has never been more important than it is at this very moment. Over the last year it seems that the majority of the news stories regarding the Postal Service are negative. Lost revenue, delays in service, and poor customer service saturate the news feeds. For decades strong support from the public has helped shield us from some of the Postal reform that could be devastating to our way of life. In the past, legislation has been proposed to change where, when and how we deliver the mail and we have always combated the negative proposals with tremendous support from the people we serve. I fear that that support is little by little, year after year diminishing. As route inspection teams started to eliminate routes and over burden the remaining routes it has become more difficult to take the time to give your customers special attention. Please give your customers the service that they pay for and deserve. It frustrates me when the people who are hired to manage us don't understand or care about this concept. In management's eyes the faster you are defines your quality as a Letter Carrier. This couldn't be further from the truth and I want to be clear that what I am about to say is in no way specific to anyone. I am just asking you as you read this to ask yourself "Have I Done That?" If you have, please reconsider the way you do your job. There are many frustrating problems that I know are happening service wide and need to be corrected right away. Have you ever? Ignored alerts cards and delivered any and all mail to a specific address? I know this happens more often than not because I have been told to my face that there is not enough time to read names on boxes or to read alert cards and if they don't live there then the new resident will write "no longer at this address" and leave it in the box for tomorrow. What kind of forwarding system is that?

Have you ever? Delivered a certified or registered piece of mail without getting a signature? These are services that the customer pays extra for and is an important part of their business. Have you ever? Brought back mail for an inconvenient delivery because they only had one piece of bulk mail or you accessed that the mail somehow wasn't important enough for that day? Have you ever? Skipped blocked mailboxes because there was a garbage can or a car in the way? Get out and deliver the mail. We should NEVER skip boxes unless it happens regularly and notices have been left and your supervisor approves the hold. These are just a few of the issues I notice everyday. There are many more. Integrity for the mail should be important to you. Above all else. I know carriers are overwhelmed and it seems there isn't enough time in the day. I assure you that there is always time to do the job right. Change your estimates, demand more time, do it right.

In Solidarity
Mike Hansen
Executive Vice President
NALC Branch 111

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
April 8, 2021

The meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom software.

Convened at 6:30 pm

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Amie Gallo,

Moment of Silence for Roger Wilson who passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

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

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees.

- President Wahlquist received a letter from carrier Ryan Astin. It addressed concerns he has with the Hamilton letter and how changes to the monetary remedies for certain grievances should have different, yet progressive, remedies.
- The Branch received a letter from Steven Franz expressing his appreciation for the 55-year service award he received.
- From the SLC Postmaster dated March 29th concerning the relocation of the SLC Downtown Station. The building lease expires April 30, 2021. City letter carriers will be temporarily relocated to the SLC Carrier Annex at 1795 W 2100 S. • Notice of the Safety and Health Committee meeting was received. It will be held on April 8th at 2:30pm.

Application for Membership by Amie Gallo

Christopher Zambos, Maria Arroyo, Mary Murphy, Lara Cleeland, Christopher Vowles, Mason Carson, Rebekah Braly, Quintin Villareal

LCPF by Josh Thibodeau – not present

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey not present

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- HR695 that would repeal the pre-funding, has 257 co-sponsors which is very positive. Call your representatives to get their support. • There is a lot of AFL-CIO trainings going on for union leaders.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- The trustees met Tuesday. Very easy, they were all caught up. Next month is reviewing the LM2.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell

- The OWCP director has asked all employees to go on ECOMP (ecomp.dol.gov) and register even though you haven't had an injury or claim. Once registered it is the easiest way to handle future injuries and file CA-1s or CA-2s. Then you don't have to worry about supervisors not handling paperwork properly. • OWCP is going to get friendlier and easier to get claims accepted.

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- The Monthly HB newsletter says that about 1 person dies every 36 seconds from cardiovascular disease (about 575,000 per year). Everyone needs to learn how to reduce stress and eat better.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist

- Only about 20 new CCAs since last month. All are signing up except 1 occasionally.

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist

The Safety & Health meeting was postponed until April 22nd. • Fill out the 1767 when you feel you have a safety issue. You can call OSHA directly if you feel you aren't getting results. • Take a screen shot of your 1767 and send it to Justin so he can follow-up.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay – no report

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- The LM2 was signed and sent in.

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo - excused

- 691 grievances filed so far this year. • Stewards are being asked to take their completed grievances to the office so they can get recorded and filed in a timely manner. • The mask mandate will remain in effect for the postal service even if local authorities remove the mandate.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT by Mike Hansen - excused

PRESIDENT by Mike Wahlquist

- The Rescue America Act gives 600 hours of leave for any Covid related needs (including getting vaccinated or reactions to vaccination).
- Our NBA says to provide any documentation that you are requested to provide. If you are uncomfortable giving medical documentation to your supervisor, you can give it to the occupational health nurse.
- Currently they are only authorizing 80 hours of additional sick leave but that should change. Complete the 3971 for Covid issues (stewards have the codes for it). If you are denied the leave for Covid, call President Wahlquist and he will appeal it through the NBA's office. You can get a note from a teacher if kids are schooling at home.
- We haven't got our pay raises or backpay from the new contract yet. Hopefully it will get done by May 8th (60 days).
- The Summer Party is scheduled for June 26th at the Murray Park Aquatic Center. This is tentative based on the Covid restrictions at the time.
- The Steak Fry is tentatively scheduled for August 28th at the Murray Park Pavilion #5.
- It was previously announced we might have an in-person May union meeting. Current restriction probably will not allow that. We will start in-person meetings as soon as mask restrictions are totally lifted.
- New phone lines were installed in the office.
- The Downtown office move to the annex will tentatively happen on the 17th. Wahlquist reminded them of the problem carriers had loading because of the bad doors in the annex building. The doors are being replaced to accommodate carts and gurneys. Additional fencing is being added to provide secure parking. Vehicles will likely be moved to the annex on Sunday by other employees.
- They are looking at adding portable units for retail sales to be available at the annex.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

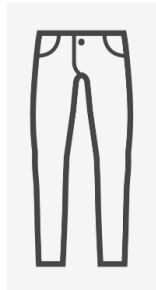
GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none

DRAW AND ADJOURN – 7:10 pm

- \$25 drawing winners: Kelly Grater and Sean Phillips- checks to be mailed
- RETIREES – \$325 (William Irvine was not present). Next month it will be \$350
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$425 (James Myers was not present). Next month it will be \$450.
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$75 (Beverly Arnason was not present). Next month it will be \$100.

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

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Address Service Requested

Keep on delivering!!!

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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