



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

# Pavement Pounder

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

October 2022

Publication 2022.10

**November 1**

**MDA in conjunction with Rap Session**

**MDA will be holding**  
**a Bowling tournament**

The Bowling tournament is part of Branch 111's fund raising  
for the

Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).

Start building a team for lots of fun, food and fundraising.  
(with prize drawings)

Events will start at 10 noon at Bonwood Bowl.  
2500 S Main Street

# President's Report

## Why Are We Understaffed?

We are living in unprecedented times. I started carrying mail in 1987, and the first time I ever saw mail not go out (other than once during a blizzard) was within the last 12 months. For the last 12 months it has become so common that in some offices it is a daily occurrence. We qualify for over 130 CCAs in the Salt Lake Installation, and we currently have around 30. I don't know any offices that are properly staffed, not even close. Some offices have 1 CCA when they really need 7 or 8. People are working to the maximum hours every week and I have never seen more disability retirements and injuries than we have now.

Why is proper staffing important? It is important because after too many 12- hour days Carriers turn into zombies. Zombies have more accidents. Zombies become injured because the sheer quantity of work is too much for their bodies. Zombies start calling in sick, either because they are desperate, or because by that point they are actually physically sick from the enormous amount of work. Zombies' morale goes into the toilette, and zombies begin to get angry with supervisors, managers, and fellow zombies for every imagined sleight, simply because they are hurting. Zombie families start treating them like the zombies that they have become, because zombies are rarely home. And customer service becomes impossible.

So, what can we do about it? Before we get into that, let's talk about what management should be doing about it.

It states in Article 3 of the National Contract:

***3.A The Employer shall have the exclusive right, subject to the provisions of this Agreement and consistent with applicable laws and regulations:***

***A. To direct employees of the Employer in the performance of official duties;***

***B. To hire, promote, transfer, assign, and retain employees in positions within the Postal Service and to suspend, demote, discharge, or take other disciplinary action against such employees;***

***C. To maintain the efficiency of the operations entrusted to it;***

***D. To determine the methods, means, and personnel by which such operations are to be conducted;***

And it states in the EL312 Section 211.1:

***While the installation head is responsible for forecasting recruitment needs, local management from all organizational functions must work together in assessing how changing operational needs will affect recruitment needs.***

***Proper use of the installation hiring plan is essential to quality decisions about bringing new employees into the workforce.***

So what is the problem? Why is management not hiring more employees? In the past, Branch 111 has tried filing staffing grievances, but to no avail because if management wants to pay overtime for work, they have that contractual right. What management doesn't have a right to do is to break the contractual maximums, which are:

### January through November Maximum Hours

CCAs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)

PTRs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)

Non ODL Carrier: 11.5 plus a lunch (60 per week)

WA Carrier: 12 plus a lunch\*(60 per week)

### December Maximum Hours

CCAs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)

PTRs: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)

Non ODL Carrier: 11.5 plus a lunch (no limit per week)

WA Carrier: No limit on either\*

Management can leave mail on the ground (as unbelievable as that is), but they shouldn't break the contractual maximums. Of course, as I have mentioned previously, the contractual maximums will even be too much for some. So back to the question, why isn't management hiring more employees?

Amie Gallo and I have been meeting with the Postmaster of the Salt Lake City Installation all year, and we talk about staffing every meeting. Local management has held dozens of hiring events, including going out to military bases for those that would have previous Federal service. So why haven't they been able to hire? Because the economy in Utah is too good. People are not willing to start at \$18.92 an hour, when they can make that much or more working at a fast-food restaurant, or some easy desk job. In places like southern Nevada, they have no problem hiring because the economy of southern Nevada is garbage, but in places with strong economies, or a high cost of living, that wage just won't cut it to get people in the door. The USPS is well aware of this, so they came up with the idea of hiring directly at PTF in installations where hiring is a problem. They have over 100 installations currently hiring directly at the PTF hourly wage (\$21.82) plus benefits. No office in Branch 111 has been added to that list because things are not as bad here as they are in those other installations (if you can imagine that). However, this solution has had unintended consequences that are extremely dire. In every installation where they have implemented hiring directly at PTF, all the CCAs in the surrounding installations have quit so that they could immediately be hired in the all-PTF installation for the raise and benefits. The hiring solution created an even worse problem in all the surrounding installations. Unless the USPS does it Nation-wide, this solution will always cause even worse hiring issues. Here in Utah, local management would eagerly change to all PTF hiring, but they have no ability to do so without National-level approval, which we cannot get at this time, and quite frankly wouldn't want (unless they did it Nation-wide), because every Associate Office within 50 miles of any Installation that chose all PTF hiring would immediately have zero CCAs.

My belief is that all of these issues may be fixed with the next contract. However, our current contract does not expire until May 20<sup>th</sup> of 2023, and contracts are usually not done for a long period of time after the expiration. So we may have a fairly long period of time with horrible staffing, and when I say horrible staffing I mean the worse staffing anyone has ever seen.

So what can we do until the staffing is fixed? The answer is to take care of yourself first and foremost. If you are fatigued to the point where you cannot continue, then you have to take care of your health first. Management has no problem delaying mail if they are not able to get it all delivered. In fact, we may have times during peak season where we deliver only packages (I hope that doesn't happen, but it might). I have asked all Shop Stewards to file grievances for all of the 11.5 hour, 12 hour, and 60 hour violations. The Shop Stewards will be watching for all of these violations, but we need the help of all carriers in this endeavor. If you have worked past your hourly maximums (see above), or have been mandated improperly, please tell your Shop Steward so that he or she can file the grievance.

Michael J. Wahlquist

-President, NALC Branch 111

**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.



Recently the Stewards Downtown have been working hard to clear old discipline from their Carrier's files. Their work reminded me of an article I wrote a couple years ago.

Here it is. Hopefully it will help others in the branch clean up their files as well.

### Taking Out the Trash

I went several years of my career not knowing what an eOPF file even was. I also went several years just assuming Management would purge my file of past discipline because that is what they were supposed to do. I was wrong. If you've ever been disciplined in your career, that discipline exists in your eOPF and after 2 years should have been purged completely but management is not doing this without a request from the employee.

#### So what is a eOPF?

The Official Personnel Folder, or OPF, documents the employment history of individuals employed by the federal government. An OPF is established and maintained for each Postal Service employee regardless of appointment type or duration. Official Personnel Folders for active employees were converted from paper to **electronic Official Personnel Folders (eOPFs)** in 2008, and the eOPF became the official record. You can easily access, view and/or print documents in your eOPF on Liteblue>My HR>access eOPF.

Explore your eOPF. It contains tons of information about your career. Form 50s, beneficiary information, military service, and yes, discipline. My intent with this article is to help carriers get past discipline removed from their eOPF. So how do we accomplish this? PS Form 8043 can be found with a simple Google search. Complete the form and be specific about what you want removed from your file. Then send your completed form to our Human Resources Office for fulfillment.

What about your "living file" or file kept at your office? Your "living file" that is kept in your station should also be cleaned out so expired discipline is not used to sway future discipline. Write a request to view your file. If discipline exists, write another request to remove all expired discipline from your file. Then in a few months request to view your file again.

I hope this helps. In Solidarity, Mike Hansen, Vice President, NALC Branch 111

#### Health Benefits — Jim Kerekes

Open Season will be November 14 through December 12. Remember if you are doing any changes including dental and/ vision you have till 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on the last day. That's 9:59pm Mountain Time.

The following are the rates for the NALC Health Benefit Plan for all options starting January 1, 2023.

Active Letter Carriers pay the following BIWEEKLY.

High Option Self is \$102.98, High Option Self and Family is \$211.30, High Option Self plus One is \$241.73. Note: Self plus one has been higher than self and family, so if you need self plus one choose self and family and pay less, it's the same coverage under the high option of the plan.

CDHP Option Self is \$55.73. CDHP Option Self and Family is \$132.03. CDHP Self plus One is \$122.95

Value Option Self is \$45.74. Value Option Self and Family is \$102.40. Value Option Self plus One is \$100.90.

The following rates are the MONTHLY Rates for retirees.

High Option Self is \$223.12. High Option Self and Family is \$457.82. High Option Self plus One is \$523.75. Note: Again the self plus one is higher than self and family, so if you want self plus one sign up for self and family and pay less, same coverage.

CDHP Option Self is \$120.74 CDHP Option Self and Family is \$ 286.06. CDHP Option Self plus One is \$266.40.

Value Option Self is \$99.10. Value Option Self and Family is \$234.88. Value Option Self plus One is \$218.62.

These rates are the highest we have ever paid for our health insurance. But lets hope that the newly passed Postal Reform Act will provide some relief in the coming years and hopefully the cost of prescriptions will go down. If you have any questions about any of these options send me a text or voicemail and I will respond the same day or next.

Brothers & Sisters,

I've been asked by Salt Lake County Council at Large candidate, Suzanne Harrison, and a few others of our endorsed candidates if I could get a message out to **ALL** members of our unions.

Their ask is to remind them that ballots are going to be dropped on October 18<sup>th</sup> and some of their races are going to be close. They are hoping to get the word out to every member, a reminder of who you as a local are endorsing and ask them to please take a few minutes and either fill out the ballot that is mailed to them or plan on getting out to the voting booths on election day and make sure that we get our Labor Friendly Candidates elected!

If there is any way that you can get an email or a text message out to your membership with your endorsement list and encourage them to take part in this upcoming election, it would be greatly appreciated!!

The following is a list of the Utah AFL-CIO Endorsement List for your information: "Jeff Worthington" <[jeff@utahaflcio.org](mailto:jeff@utahaflcio.org)>

U.S. Senate	Utah House District 39	Utah House District 27	Utah Senate District 9
Evan McMullin	Hope Goeckeritz	Clare Collard	Jen Plumb
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Utah House District 36	Utah House District 43	Utah House District 30	Utah Senate District 12
Jim Dunnigan	Steve Eliason	Judy Weeks-Rohner	Karen Mayne
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Utah House District 37	Utah House District 45	Salt Lake County Council (District 3)	Utah Senate District 14
Ashlee Matthews	Susan Pulsipher	Aimee Winder Newton	Stephanie Pitcher
-----	-----	-----	-----
	Utah House District 62		Utah House District 3
	Daniel Craig Friend	Salt Lake County Sheriff	Patrick Belmont
	-----	Rosie Rivera	-----
	Utah House District 67	-----	Utah House District 10
	Christine Watkins	Salt Lake County Clerk	Rosemary Lesser
	-----	Lannie Chapman	-----
	Utah House District 69	-----	Utah House District 16
	Davina Smith	Salt Lake County District Attorney	Steve Handy (Write-In Candidate)
	-----	Sim Gill	-----
	Salt Lake County Council (At-Large B)		Utah House District 24
	Suzanne Harrison		Jennifer Dailey-Provost

## NALC BRANCH 111

### **Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting**

**October 13, 2022**

**Convened** at 6:40 pm

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

**Pledge of Allegiance** conducted by Mike Hansen

**Roll Call** by Steve McNees

**Minutes** of the Sept. 2022 meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

**Reading of the Communications** – Steve McNees

- President Wahlquist sent a letter formally endorsing Jim Dunnigan for the Utah House of Representatives, District 39. • We received a poster from Francisco Cabrera who is running for National NALC Board of Trustees. • Downtown carrier, Dino Panti, is requesting donations for his nephew who has a tumour by his thyroid.

**Application for Membership** by Mike Hansen

- none

**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:** Darlene McDonald

Darlene McDonald is running to represent Congressional District 4. She is running against Burgess Owens. We need to have representatives that show up and listen (Burgess didn't show up for the debate last night). She wants to make sure we save the Great Salt Lake and have a safe future. We have to use less water and waste less water. She thinks postal employees should get credit for their work performed before becoming career employees and supports bills for this. Thanked us for the great service we provided in the 2020 election. Utah does elections right and other states should follow our example. Vote by mail is safe and well protected from fraud.

**LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND** by Josh Thibodeau - excused

**MDA COORDINATOR** by Jeremy Bailey

- Raise \$230 for MDA tonight. He served free hamburgers and hot dogs for everyone. There are extra hamburgers, hot dogs and buns in our freezer if you know of anyone who needs them.
- He is putting on another bowling tournament during Rap Session on Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> at 10pm (with prize drawings).

**DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS** - Jimmy Fleming – not present

•

**LEGISLATIVE** by Chad Mortensen

- A member found Darlene McDonald was a good candidate and made Chad aware. Anyone aware of a good candidate should make us (and Chad) aware.
- The AFL-CIO, Central Fed, and the Northern Utah Labor Council have a list of candidates that have been vetted and are supported by Labor organizations. It will be in the Pavement Pounder. Support is given to those who support us without regard to their party affiliation.
- Candidates need volunteers to help them. The union is not allowed to financially support candidates but we can help them and make personal donations or donate through LCPF.

**TRUSTEES** by Chad Mortensen

- They did not meet this month because the treasurer was out of town. It is a lot easier when he is at the audit. Members can view the financial records and budgets if interested.

**MBA, COMPENSATION** by Bob Jewell • no report

**HEALTH BENEFITS** by Jim Kerekes

- James Raymond, NBA's office, will be teaching about retirement at the rap session this month. • The 2023 rates are out already. He will put the new rates in the Pavement Pounder. • Nov 12 - Dec 14 are the Health Benefits Open Season dates.

**ORGANIZER** by Justin Lindquist

- He has been signing up all new carriers until the last training where 2 did not sign up.

**SAFETY AND HEALTH** by Justin Lindquist

- Make sure you are watching out for each other in your offices. There is a lot of pressure. We have to protect each other. Only work the hours that you can safely work. • The Form 1767 was created to allow us to get involved in office safety without having to talk to the supervisor (just put it on their desk).

## **DIRECTOR OF RETIREES** by Jeff Asay

- Open Season is coming up. Retirees need to go to OPM.GOV and create your single account for all of your government accounts (Medicare, retirement, OPM, Social Security). Then if you want to change anything or sign up for something new, you will be ready to do it.
- Medicare costs are going down by about \$7.00. Retirement and Social Security benefits are going up about 8-9%.

**TREASURER** by Mike Madsen – no report (payroll has gone out)

**VICE PRESIDENT** by Amie Gallo – no report

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT** by Mike Hansen

- 1,691 grievances filed so far this year. The calendars are in and ready for stewards to pick up. Extra calendars are \$4 each.
- Stewards' dinner is next Wednesday at 6:30pm. An RSVP email has been sent out by Amie Gallo. Contact her if you haven't received your notice. Let Amie know if you aren't coming.

**PRESIDENT** by Mike Wahlquist

- At Labor Management Meeting we found out we are entitled to 135 CCAs but actually have about 30. We are trying to get all CCAs hired directly as PTFs in the future.
- Most likely, the next 3 months are going to be epochally bad. Mail will not be getting delivered but parcels will be delivered. Grievances need to be filed for not having mail delivered every day.
- The Utah economy is so good that it is hard for the USPS to hire.
- Flooring has been purchased for the office. We will be hiring union members to do the renovations in the office.
- Thanked Jeremy Bailey and Monte Jones for cooking the hamburgers and hot dogs tonight.

## **SPECIAL ORDERS:**

Election of delegates to the 2023 Utah State Convention April 20-21, 2023 in Vernal, UT.

All following nominees are elected by acclamation: Jenny Woodall, Courtney Chatterton, April Pettley, Kim Mortensen, Jeff Asay, Brent Console, Spencer Heinz, Fernando Palafox, Amie Gallo, Josh Thibodeau, Jim Kerekes, Mike Hansen, Kirk McLaughlin, Chad Mortensen, Keith Warner, Monte Jones, Mike Simonsen, Stormy Blood, Jeff Ertmann, Mike Madsen, Mike Wahlquist, Jeremy Bailey, Steve Warren, Kelly Grater, Justin Lindquist, Bob Valdez, Bob Jewell, Destiney Carrillo, Josh Jessop, Alisha Barela, Marisa Barela, Blake Mellor, Jay Reupena, Rachel Burton, Jennifer Ogden, Kevin Green, Eric Grotepas.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** none

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A motion was made to spend \$2,000 on swag (Branch 111 hoodies) to wear at conventions, training and other meetings. They will be sold for \$20-25 (about half of cost) to those who want one and the money paid will go back into buying more merchandise. The motion passed.
- A motion was made to budget \$10,000 for the purchase and upgrade of a new trailer to replace our old branch trailer (that is too small and old). It is used for transporting and storing our picnic and other equipment. The motion passed.

## **GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:**

## **FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE:**

A motion was made to formally endorse Darlene McDonald as a candidate for Congressional District 4. The motion passed.

## **DRAW AND ADJOURN** – 8: pm

- \$25 drawing winners were Bob Jewell and Sheila Davis
- RETIREES – \$175 (Benny Cordova Jr was not present). Next month it will be \$200
- PROGRESSIVE A - \$350 (Michael Krelow was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$375
- PROGRESSIVE B - \$250 (Jared Taylor was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$275



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## Keep on Delivering.



The financial records of Branch 111 are available to anyone by appointment and a monthly record is always available at Branch 111 monthly meeting.

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Mike Wahlquist  
**Executive Vice-President**  
Mike Hansen  
**Vice-President**  
Amie B. Gallo  
**Treasurer**  
Mike Madsen  
**Secretary**  
Steve McNees  
**Sergeant-at-Arms**  
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The  
*“Pavement Pounder”*  
is the Official Publication of  
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the  
*“Wasatch Branch”*

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