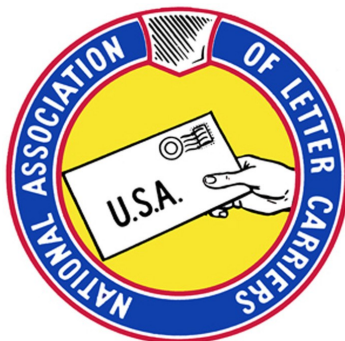


Pavement Pounder



February 2023

Publication 2023.02

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

March

Thursday 2nd	E-Board
Thursday 9th	Branch Meeting
Sunday 12th	Daylight Savings
Wednesday 15th	Steward Training

April

Thursday 6th	E-Board
Thursday 13th	Branch Meeting
16th-20th	Steward College
21st & 22nd	State Convention
Wednesday 26th	Retirees Dinner

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



@NALCbranch111



@nalc111

President's Report

2023-The Year of the New Contract

We have just finished the most difficult Peak Season I have ever witnessed. I want to thank every Letter Carrier who carried during this unprecedented and extremely difficult time. I know there were insane hours and difficult conditions, including snow, freezing temperatures, darkness, huge volumes of packages, and the stress and anxiety of the season. Probably the worst thing about this Peak Season was the insufficient staffing. Normally I would blame local management for not getting more people hired, but that would have been disingenuous. The reality is that the current starting wage (locked in by the 2019-2023 contract) just didn't keep pace with the higher wages that were brought on by inflation. And inflation was brought on by the increase in the money supply (up to over 21 trillion from 15.41 Trillion in early 2020), and strange supply chain issues, but those are different issues (and I could write a whole different article about them). Ultimately, the strong economy in Utah cursed us with low staffing.

There is light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, however. I spoke with Scott Smith yesterday. He said that in the Salt Lake Installation we were up to 46 CCAs (at one point we were down to just over 30). The Salt Lake Installation needs about 140 CCAs, so we still have a long way to go, but we are moving in the right direction. And I spoke with a NALC national officer a couple of weeks ago. He told me that it is a "foregone conclusion" that the Postal Service will bring PTFs back into the next contract (he meant hiring Letter Carriers directly into the PTF position) with the accompanying full benefits and higher wages. While the contract has not been negotiated yet, and nothing has been inked, if the parties are thinking along those lines, it sounds very promising. With staffing at historically low levels across the country, the parties know that they need to make drastic changes to incentivize people to become Letter Carriers. And hiring directly at the PTF level has been done several times in the past, so there is a precedent for doing that. Should that take place, all current CCAs would immediately become PTFs, with the accompanying benefits and raises. The bad news is that the current contract runs until May 20th, 2023, and contract negotiations usually go for many months beyond the expiration of the contract (at least that is how it's been for as long as I can remember) so we still have a wait ahead of us.

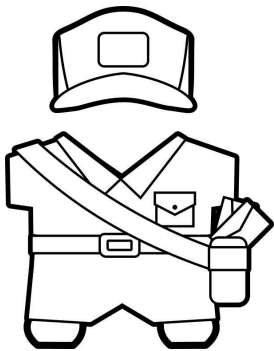
The thing to remember is that things will get better with the next contract. Those of us who have been around for 30 plus years know that there are reoccurring cycles within the Post Office. I have witnessed several different times when we have had low staffing (never to this level, but low). And I have witnessed several times when we have had high staffing, where overtime was hard to come by. I am certain that we will get to the point again where overtime is scarce. I hope that every Letter Carrier out there takes note of that statement, because there is no guarantee of overtime, and it can dry up just as fast as we became flooded with it. Remember to live off your base salary and treat overtime as a bonus. Those who start to live off their overtime often find themselves short of money when the overtime goes away.

I have high hopes that our next contract will solve many of our current problems. The NALC knows that we need to attract more people to work here, and the USPS knows it as well.

Thanks again for all your hard work. Letter Carriers are the lifeblood of the nation.

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.

Opinion from the streets. Nathan Chester (Bountiful)

"Catch-22...says you've always got to do what your commanding officer tells you to.'

'But Twenty-seventh Air Force says I can go home with forty missions.

'But they don't say you have to go home.

And regulations do say you have to obey every order. That's the catch.

Even if the colonel were disobeying a Twenty-seventh Air Force order

by making you fly more missions, you'd still have to fly them, or you'd

be guilty of disobeying an order of his. And then the Twenty-seventh

Air Force Headquarters would really jump on you." Catch-22

1: a problematic situation for which the only solution is denied by a circumstance inherent in the problem or by a rule. also : the circumstance or rule that denies a solution

a: an illogical, unreasonable, or senseless situation

b: a measure or policy whose effect is the opposite of what was intended

c: a situation presenting two equally undesirable alternatives

d: a hidden difficulty or means of entrapment.

The novel's catch-22 was as follows: a combat pilot was crazy by definition (he would have to be crazy to fly combat missions) and since army regulations stipulated that insanity was justification for grounding, a pilot could avoid flight duty by simply asking, but if he asked, he was demonstrating his sanity (anyone who wanted to get out of combat must be sane) and had to keep flying. Catch-22 soon entered the language as the label for any irrational, circular, and impossible situation. Does this concept seem familiar? It does to me. Take the first paragraph and apply it to the 12/60 rule. It's an exact match. The contract clearly states "Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (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 work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours." Of course, this was not clear enough and a further arbitration was needed to clarify. "The parties agree that with the exception of December, full-time employees are prohibited from working more than 12 hours in a single work day or 60 hours within a service week. In those limited instances where this provision is or has been violated and a timely grievance filed, full-time employees will be compensated at an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate for those hours worked beyond the 12 or 60 hour limitation. The employment of this remedy shall not be construed as an agreement by the parties that the Employer may exceed the 12 and 60 hour limitation with impunity. 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." And then yet another:

"Arbitrator Snow ruled in C-18926 that the Memorandum of Understanding M-00859 limits the remedy for any violations of the Article 8.5.G maximum hour limits to an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate. However, Arbitrator Snow's award does not necessarily limit remedies for repeated or deliberate violations of ELM 432.32." Simply put- the 12/60 rule is absolute. But it's not. When it's not, you need to file a grievance to get 50% more, which is limited, unless it's not limited. Get it?

“Employees must obey the instructions of their supervisors. If an employee has reason to question the propriety of a supervisor’s order, the individual must nevertheless carry out the order and may immediately file a protest in writing to the official in charge of the installation or may appeal through official channels.”

As a carrier the contract clearly (?) states that I must be sent home when I reach my 60th hour of work, unless my supervisor instructs me to work, but I can immediately file a protest in writing. Does immediate mean “hold on, I’m going to write a protest and then go carry some more mail”? And then the Supervisor instructs me to stop protesting and go carry mail and then I immediately write a protest about that? I once was sent back out in the dark. I asked for a headlamp. The Supervisor grabbed a new headlamp and then told me to “sign out for it”. I asked “Why? There are a million things that I use every day to carry the mail that are worth more than this headlamp.” Supervisor says “I was told to have you guys sign out for them so they don’t go missing”.

“If I sign out for this headlamp and it goes missing, you are going to try to get me to pay for it?” “I guess so”. “Keep it, I’ll go carry in the dark super slow and safe since I can’t see. I’m on overtime, so I’ll earn your headlamp savings in about 5 minutes. I probably already cost you the headlamp having this amazing discussion”. Supervisor -”here” (tosses headlamp to me) This scenario repeats itself millions of times every day in the USPS. It’s quite literally an insane place to work. I find that it’s so insane that I often create my own Catch-22. We’re short staffed, might as well make some OT, Get some Penalty, Holy cow, this building is depressing and gross, can’t wait to hit the street (case and pull down a little faster) Man, this truck is cold (or hot), uncomfortable, depressing and gross. Plus this job is very boring, lonely and my shoulder is hurting, can’t wait to get home a have a nice beverage and dinner (deliver a little faster) Punch out before hitting penalty (man, they got me today) Next day -Supervisor “can you carry some overtime”? Me “sure”.

The very nature of the USPS as it’s currently constituted is a Catch-22 It’s in the name: “Service”. There is no language anywhere that calls what we do a business. Unless you talk to a postmaster or higher level employee. They all want to call it a business. If it were a business, it has the worst business plan ever. We are required to provide service equally to all communities regardless of cost. Many of us at one point or another have tried to “help” the USPS by being very fast, or very efficient, or saving our leave, or a thousand other things. I was (am, trying not to be so much) one of those. A stark reality is this -you cannot out-exercise a bad diet. You also cannot work the USPS out of any failures. If your office were reduced to two carriers to carry all the mail, the USPS would still end up “losing” money. And the supervisor would still “observe” one of those carriers for not doing something or another.

What’s my point? I don’t know. Maybe there is no point. I do know there’s no point to all the arbitrary goals and numbers that get thrown at us. Here’s what we owe the USPS -A fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay. Period. Try your absolute best to protect yourself from mental and physical injury. Provide excellent service to your fellow Americans. Plan for retirement. Maximize your TSP earnings. Take care of yourself.

“That's some catch, that Catch-22,' he observed. 'It's the best there is,' Doc Daneeka agreed. Yossarian saw it clearly in all its spinning reasonableness. There was an elliptical precision about its perfect pairs of parts that was graceful and shocking, like good modern art, and at times Yossarian wasn't quite sure that he saw it at all, just the way he was never quite sure about good modern art...”

Yours in solidarity, Nathan Chester (Bountiful)

NALC BRANCH 111
Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting
February 9, 2023

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 for Duane Wilcox who passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the January 2023 union meeting were posted. Without objection, they will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications – Steve McNees

- none

Application for Membership by Mike Wahlquist

- Donovan Mamo, Nasir Bakri, Jude Eaton, Ronnie Griffin, Clint Nelson, Allen Pasela, Shelby Atwood, Timothy Skougard, Daniel Jimenez, Derrick Thomas
- Rachael Chatwin was sworn in.

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

MDA COORDINATOR by Jeremy Bailey

- They will get a new trailer this week for hauling picnic and MDA equipment (already approved).

DIRECTOR OF VETERAN AFFAIRS - Jimmy Fleming

- Wounded Warrior instructions (how to apply and qualify) are in the Pavement Pounder.
- Don't talk to management behind closed doors (they don't understand the rules), without your steward present.
- Fill out form PS-5980 to apply for your leave.
- The Veteran's guide is on the NALC.org website. Jimmy will order some guides for new employees.
- Jimmy has veteran patches for those interested.

LEGISLATIVE by Chad Mortensen

- Chad is going to meet on March 28th with our Senators and Representative to discuss the Federal Retiree Fairness Act, Windfall Elimination and other issue.
- Every Wednesday Chad attends the AFL-CIO Legislative Labor Caucus. There are several bills about voting (like vote-by-mail). One would count the mail-in ballots on the day of the election.
- HB241 (The Union Amendment Bill) will prohibit state employees from having dues deducted from their pay checks, no union duties on the clock, and no union business or gatherings on state property. Please call your representative and ask them to vote no on HB-241. It is the most anti-union bill presented in Utah in a long time.

TRUSTEES by Chad Mortensen

- They met Tuesday and everything is up-to-date and looking good. The financial records are available for members to check if you have any questions or concerns.

MBA, COMPENSATION by Bob Jewell – no report

HEALTH BENEFITS by Jim Kerekes

- Plan members can join the Hello Heart program to track your blood pressure. You get a free blood pressure device that helps track your blood pressure through your smartphone (join.helloheart.com/NALC).
- The 2025 postal reform health act is being set up. Eventually everyone will have to select a plan or they will be assigned a plan.
- Everyone of Medicare age will have to carry parts A and B.
- OPM has to create an educational plan/program by this October.

ORGANIZER by Justin Lindquist – not present

SAFETY AND HEALTH by Justin Lindquist – not present

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES by Jeff Asay

- April 26th from 3:30 to 5:30 is the Retiree Dinner at the Chuck-A-Arama in Draper.

TREASURER by Mike Madsen

- Last month was at was a break-even month, we spent \$250 more than we brought in. • The proposed budget was passed out.
- Prior year's budget and spending chart: [Year, budgeted (projected income minus expected expenses), actual income or deficit] (2019, \$-92,000, \$-34,000); (*2020, \$-67,000, \$+28,000); (*2021, \$-47,000, \$+13,400); (*2022, \$-48,000, \$-11,000). 2022 was actually worse because we had \$30,000 of unexpected income from grievance settlements. • This year's budget projects a deficit spending of \$75,000. • We should be going back to career employees (PTF vs CCA), with an increase of 100 new employees, and pay raises will increase our dues amounts for an increase in our projected income. We currently have about \$250,000 in our savings account.
- * pandemic years

VICE PRESIDENT by Amie Gallo – no report**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT** by Mike Hansen – no report**PRESIDENT** by Mike Wahlquist

19 signed up for steward college (very good). Since getting about \$30,000 from Article 31.17 (overtime) grievance settlements we are trying to send as many as possible to training. It is a new class we have never had before. State Convention delegates will be contacted over the next month. Some will qualify for funding while other may not depending on the number of meetings attended.

SPECIAL ORDERS: none**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- A Proposed Bylaws Change was Read last month and voted on this month: Article 4, Section 8 will add: *The Vice President shall work in the Branch 111 Office two days each month during the normal operating hours of Branch 111.* Article 8, Section 7.B will be replaced with: *The Vice President shall receive a monthly salary of 40 hours at NALC City Carrier Grade 2, Step P, Carrier Technician rate.* A standing vote was held. The vote was 17 for and 19 against. The motion failed.
- BUDGET PROPOSAL: Budget line items will be held out for discussion and then vote on the remainder of the budget. Line items held out to discuss: AFL-CIO dues on page 1 and all MDA items on page 1. Motion to pass the budget with 2 issues held out, passed. Held out items: AFL-CIO proposed items passed with no change. Motion to combine both MDA categories into one MDA line item, passed. The budget passed with one modification.

NEW BUSINESS: none**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:**

- Randy Bruschi received his retirement watch. He spoke about the benefits and health that his many years of service have provided him.
- Branch 111 currently has added Facebook and Instagram sites to help get information out to members. Come join in. Branch 68 is doing a bingo night on March 18th for MDA. It will be at the Eagles lodge in Brigham City.

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none**DRAW AND ADJOURN** – 7:45 pm

\$25 drawing winners were Nathan Chester and Tracey Smith Uresk
RETIREES – \$50 (Larry Focht was not present). Next month it will be \$75
PROGRESSIVE A - \$450 (Karalee Weaver was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$475
PROGRESSIVE B - \$350 (Dylan Cobb was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$375

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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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Executive
Vice-President
Mike Hansen
Vice-President
Amie B. Gallo
Treasurer
Mike Madsen
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