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Branch 111  
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# The Pavement Pounder



**OCTOBER 2003**

Bountiful \* Lehi \* Magna \* Midvale \* Murray \* Salt Lake \* Sandy \* Taylorsville \* Tooele \* West Jordan \* West Valley

## The President's Corner

**By Mike Miller**

Well, once again someone was not at the meeting and their name was drawn for the progressive drawing at the September meeting. If “John Newsome” had been at the meeting he would have won \$50. Next Union meeting, which will be November 13<sup>th</sup> since we have cancelled the October meeting, the progressive drawing will be for \$75.00. And the lucky member that attends the November meeting and gets their name drawn will be not only \$75 richer, they will also be better informed with what is going on in our branch and at the National level.

Not only that, our November meeting will the meeting we take nominations for the National Convention to be voted on at the December meeting. We also have 15 turkeys and hams that will be given away to those who come to the meeting for Thanksgiving. So mark it on you calendars and plan on being at the meeting.

October 5<sup>th</sup> is just around the corner, and many of the Stewards, Formal A Reps and Officers of the branch will be leaving for the Rap Session for training. We are fortunate here in the Pacific Western Region, for as long as I can remember, with Jim Edgeman, Jimmy Williams (Who is now the Executive Vice President of our National Union) and now with Paul Price, we have been by far the best-trained Region in the NALC. Our business agent's office has always been of the opinion that knowledge is

power, or should I say that the proper use of knowledge is power. And they have always firmly believed that by sharing that knowledge with all of the rank and file is the best way to ensure that their rights would be protected. If you don't know what your rights are, then how can you defend yourself or fight for those rights. When we go to the Rap Sessions, we gain knowledge and then bring it back to the membership as a whole. It is my opinion that the best money spent in this branch is the money spent training our Stewards and Officers; there is no better or wiser investment that we can make then that.

There is one more thing I wanted to talk to everyone about before I close. Just recently management changed the way they give raises to their supervisors and managers. From what I understand, the extent of their raise will be determined by your productivity as a letter carrier. In other words, the more they can get out of you, the bigger their raises will be. Isn't that what it always boils down to, lets put it on the backs of the craft employees. Whoever gets the biggest raises will depend on who can beat, threaten, coerce, bully and intimidate their employees into going faster, doing more and giving up their contractual rights. How much gain they can get from their bosses will depend on how much sweat and blood they can get out of you.

Now don't get me wrong, there are a lot of good decent fair bosses out there. But I feel that by not using some of these tactics on there employees, and getting the results their bosses will have imposed on them, it will unfortunately end up being a career decision for many of them.

My advice to all of you is not to let this new era we will be going through get to you. Do not allow it to destroy the atmosphere in your office or make it any worse. Be prepared for confrontation and don't let it happen. You know your job and how much time it takes on any given day to do your job safely and professionally. And I encourage you to stick to your daily estimate, do not allow it to escalate into a confrontation when they try to get you to do more in less time, simply say I'll do my best and I'll call if I can't make it, and then do just that.

We are professionals, and lets not ever forget that. We have an obligation to do our jobs in the most professional manner possible. And running, skipping deliveries, and being unsafe just to save time is not in my opinion the sign of a professional. Case and carry your mail professionally and don't allow management to intimidate you. Case and deliver your mail as safely and efficiently as you possibly can. Play

no games and don't allow management to play any games on you. If it legitimately takes 10 hours to deliver the mail on any given day, then take 10 hours to deliver it. And as long as you know you are doing a good job and doing nothing wrong then you have nothing to worry about, and don't be intimidated into thinking you are doing something wrong.

And do not be coerced into skipping your lunch and breaks just to make it in 8 hours or to make the 5 o'clock window. The union fought hard for those breaks and your lunch, and you need them to remain safe and to prevent fatigue. We work more harder now then we ever have in the history of the Postal Service and you deserve your lunch and breaks.

If, when all of this starts coming down, you begin to have a problem, do not hesitate to go to your steward for help. If the atmosphere in your zone or station starts to deteriorate and become such that people do not want to come to work because of the negative atmosphere, don't hesitate to let me know so that we can schedule station meetings to combat what is causing it. I don't mean to sound like so much doom and gloom, I have seen some of the signs, and I just want you all to be prepared, and to know that your branch officers will be there to assist you. Until then, take care.

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### Vice President Article

#### **Kirk McLaughlin**

It is getting that time of year again to start to thinking about the vacation sign-up period, it will start in the first full week of November, be ready so it can go smooth help your steward out by being ready or having a proxy filled out if you are not going to be there when bidding takes place.

Calendars will be three dollars this year, tell your shop steward how many you would like to purchase so that when they arrive the steward can get the needed amount. Have your money ready, the steward can't pick up the calendars without the money.

I had the opportunity to go to the national rap session and meet the officers that run the union, it was the largest they have had in a long time that is because of all the changes that might be going on at the post office and with our job in the future. Everyone got a video and I hope you have taken the time to look at it. Get involved in protecting your jobs for yourself and for the benefit for all citizens of this great country.

Steward appreciation dinner will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, steward call President Mike Miller or myself at the union hall 973-6705 and let us know if you are going to come to the dinner.

Here is Branch 111's call in policy when calling in to the ACO office.

## When Calling In Ill...

### Branch 111's Call in Policy

**ELM 513.332** – *You must notify management ASAP as to your illness/injury and expected duration of absence.*

**ELM 513.362** – *For absences in excess of 3 days you are required to submit medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity.*

**ELM 513.364** – *Medical documentation should be by your physician, and indicate you were unable (Incapacitated) to perform your duties. Statements like “under my care” are not normally acceptable.*

- 1.** Report incapacitation for duty ASAP.
- 2.** State name, title, pay location, duration of absence.
- 3.** Do not provide any information not required on the Form 3971.
- 4.** State “I am incapacitated for duty and will not be in today.”
- 5.** If you are late calling in, state your scheduled reporting time.
- 6.** If questioned ask: “Can I be disciplined for this?” If answer is “Yes” or “Not sure,” insist on a Steward before continuing.
- 7.** If you are threatened with AWOL for refusing to answer inappropriate questions, end the discussion and notify your Steward.
- 8.** If certification is requested, ask “Why?” “Who will pay?” “Who’s requesting it?” Ask for a reason.
- 9.** Get receipts for all expenses and submit 3971 upon return.
- 10.** Provide certification-explaining nature of incapacitation, “this does not include diagnosis or prognosis.”
- 11.** Inform your Steward ASAP; provide them with a statement receipt for medical certification for grievance.
- 12.** Follow your doctor's advice.

## Sick of the ACO

Its 5:30 in the morning. You finally caught the devastating virus that has been going around the office. You wish for the thousandth time that people would quit coming to work sick. As you get up, you know instantly that something is just not right. Your insides are quivering because you feel nauseated. As you walk to the bathroom, the room is spinning. You have no balance and you wonder if you will even make it to the toilet before you vomit. You take your temperature, "Oh no, its 103"! Then, you realize that you have to call those wonderful people at the Attendance Control Office because there is no way you are going to be able to work today.

You dial the phone, dreading the ensuing argument that you know is about to take place. A female answers the phone, "Hello Attendance Control, this is Miss Management."

"Yes hello my name is John Diss, and I am not going to be able to make it to work today. I am not feeling well."

Miss Management asks " Is this the result of an on the job injury"

"No."

Miss Management asks " Is this FLMA?"

"I'm not sure."

Miss Management asks "What are the circumstances surrounding your illness?"

"I'm not sure what you are asking."

Miss Management states, "Well in order for me to approve sick leave you need to tell me the circumstances surrounding your illness."

I ask, " Are you asking for my symptoms? Because it is embarrassing to talk about that and I'd rather not."

"No, I'm asking for the circumstances surrounding your illness."

"How can I tell you the circumstances without telling you my symptoms?"

"I don't know." Replies Miss Management, "But if you don't tell me the circumstances surrounding your illness I'll have to run you Absent With Out Leave (AWOL)."

"I'm not comfortable talking about my symptoms and I'm still not sure what you are asking me to tell you."

"Well then I'll be running you AWOL."

SLAM! There is a sudden silence. "Hello? Are you there? Hello." You ask, listening to the silent receiver. Then you say to yourself, well I guess that is it.

The next morning you go back to work and see a 3971 on your case all nicely filled out marked AWOL.

Sound familiar? Of course the names have been changed to protect the guilty. This is a reality that we in Salt Lake City have been forced, against our will, to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Why is sick leave being listed as one of our benefits when we are run AWOL when we call in sick? The time has come for all letter carriers in Utah to unite and stand against this miscarriage of justice. Sick leave is a contractual entitlement and one of the reasons we became letter carriers in the first place, knowing that our families will not go hungry while we recover from an illness. Please help us in our fight against the tyrannical ACO whose very existence is in violation of the National Agreement. You can help by filling out the following survey and then taking the time to mail it back to Branch 111 so that we can start the documentation process. The more responses that we get, the better chance we will have at winning back our contractual rights. Thanks in advance for your participation!

**By Rich Doucette and Michael Wahlquist**

## ACO Survey

1. The A.C.O. operator who took my call was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. When I called in sick, I was treated with respect.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
3. I was asked to discuss the “circumstances” surrounding my illness.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
4. I do not know how to discuss “circumstances” surrounding illness without describing symptoms.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
5. I was told that if I did not tell the ACO the circumstances that I would be run AWOL.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
6. I was forced to tell the ACO my symptoms in order to use my sick leave.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
7. The ACO hung up on me.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
8. The ACO treated me with compassion, especially because of my illness.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
9. I think that calling the ACO is better than me calling my immediate supervisor.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
10. I have received discipline that I otherwise would not have because of the ACO.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
11. I have gone to work sick because of the ACO.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
12. I feel comfortable calling the ACO.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
13. I have not received the pub. 71(FMLA guidelines) that the ACO says they sent me.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
14. I felt threatened by the ACO at some point during the phone call.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree
15. I was yelled at by the ACO operator.  
 strongly disagree     disagree     neutral     agree     strongly agree

My name is (optional, but please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the survey to: NALC Branch 111

**Attn. Richard Doucette and Michael Wahlquist**

**2261 S Redwood Rd. #14**

**SLC, UT 84119**



To: *Postal Record*

From: Phyllis Polster, Branch 111  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Can you give up one latte a month, or a soda or candy bar a week to help save your job? That's all our national officers are asking of us.

National Business Agent Paul Price attended our branch meeting in July. One of the things he said really struck me. "You pay for car insurance, home insurance, health insurance...so why not job insurance?" This simple question really made me think. The only way we can pay for car, home, and health insurance is because we have a job. The only way we can have a car, a home and the ability to protect our health is because we have a job. Paul's incredibly conservative request of each member to donate \$1 a week to COLCPE—the Committee on Letter Carriers Political Education--is the least any of us can and should do.

Our branch is asking that each member step up and contribute \$5 or \$10 through the new payroll deduction system for contributions to COLCPE (see page 9 of last month's *Record*) using PostalEASE. A \$5 payroll deduction amounts to approximately 1/2 of our last COLA.

Historically, it is retirees, by a 2-1 margin, that have consistently and generously contributed. Paul said, "If you're young and have a long time left, you better be more involved than anybody." We enjoy the right to collective bargaining, and hard-fought-for wages and benefits that are the envy of many. The Bush administration is salivating over the thought of taking all this away. A COLCPE contribution supports candidates and leaders who work to protect what we have now and what we will hopefully have in the future.

If you look up "lost jobs in U.S." on the Internet, you will find 2,090,000 sites available. That says it all. Insure that which comes first, YOUR JOB.

## **DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY: UNION'S ACHILLES HEEL**

**By: Al Ainsworth, Branch 82 Retiree**

Four decades ago a lady was attacked and murdered near her home in New York City. More than thirty neighbors heard her cries for help for a half-hour – and no one responded. They all thought someone else would help or call the police.

Since that day, social scientists have studied that type of behavior, now known as “diffusion of responsibility.” In laboratory studies, the behavior has been replicated time and time again. IN one famous experiment, an instructor was teaching a class and was suddenly called from the room for an emergency phone call. She left the room and in an adjacent room, a “staged fight” took place. There was yelling and screaming, chairs and tables slammed against the wall— all audible in the classroom. The students patiently and quietly remained in their seats waiting for their instructor to return, but no one made an attempt to notify officials. It was all recorded.

A bit later the instructor returned to the classroom and asked the students if they had heard the ruckus next door. All said they had. She then asked if anyone notified the officials. Of course, no one had. They were then asked why they had not notified someone. They all said they thought someone else would.

The inaction caused by the attitude of “diffusion of responsibility” permeates our culture. We seem to have the mindset that “someone else will do it.”

It's readily noticeable in elections – barely 50 percent of the registered voters vote...and that doesn't even factor in the ones that don't register. And have you heard a security alarm go off---whether it's a car, home or business alarm--- and responded? Have you heard cries from an elderly woman whose purse was snatched and gone to her aid? What about helping at the scene of an accident or violent act? Have you answered an unattended phone? Have you given a co-worker a ride home in an emergency? Have you written a letter to an elected official?

Situations such as these happen throughout the day in our lives and rarely do we respond.

That cultural behavior has become the Achilles heel of volunteer organizations— like your union. Too many don't run for steward because John or Sue always run for steward, leading to “burnout” from the workload and stress of the “constant battle.” A union officer once told me that representing the membership is like a relay--- doing your best when you have the baton, but when the time comes to pass the baton on to the next person – often there is no next person, because everyone feels someone else will “step to the plate,” but never them.

Each member has a responsibility---not just paying dues---to the union. The duties and responsibilities for officers and stewards are outlined, but they become pretty fuzzy and undefined for the rank and file members.

Describing those responsibilities is a work in progress. But we can begin by understanding the importance of SOLIDARITY. Part of that step could be to help make the Union an extended family---get to know your branch officers and attend a branch meeting and see how your branch functions, what are the “hot issues” and how decisions are made.

Another part of that process is to be involved in workplace issues. Share information with your steward, keep your eyes and ears open and be prepared to be an informed witness. It's also important to read and study the national and local agreements and to be an outspoken advocate for our rights. Sit down and become involved in letter writing and telephone campaigns. Another important aspect of solidarity is not to negotiate a dispute without a union representative. Help in organizing the union by recruiting non-members to join the Union--- that is even more important today s the Postal Service struggles to stay competitive in a changing market.

**Become an active member and help the union fight the insidious inaction so prevalent in “diffusion of responsibility.” Don't assume someone else will fight the good fight. It's not just their responsibility, but your responsibility too. Remember, strength comes through knowledge, unity, involvement and action.**

## THE PAVEMENT POUNDER POLICY AND NOTICES

**Union meetings are held at the Union Labor Center on the second Thursday of each month.**

NALC Branch 111 Office:  
2261 S Redwood Rd #14  
Salt Lake City UT 84119-1330

Business Hours:  
Mon, Wed, Fri 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM  
Tues, Thursday 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

**Please call before visiting the Branch office to ensure someone is there.**

**Change of address:** Please send your new address to the branch office if you have moved recently or are planning to move in the near future.

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### Statement of Policy

The Pavement Pounder newsletter is published twelve times a year. The Pavement Pounder is a publication of Branch 111. The articles printed in the newsletter are submitted by the senior union officers, members and Auxiliary of the branch to inform the members of events, news, educational matters and other material deemed for the good of the association. The appropriateness of articles published is determined by the editor. The Editor reserves the right to edit or reject articles submitted. The opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily the opinions of the NALC or of Branch 111 or of its officers or editor.

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### Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 2003		
2nd	Exec. Board meeting	6:00 pm
9 <sup>th</sup>	No Branch Meeting	
15 <sup>th</sup>	Stewards meeting	6:00 pm

NOVEMBER 2003		
6th	Exec. Board meeting	6:00 pm
13 <sup>th</sup>	Branch meeting	6:00 pm
19 <sup>th</sup>	Stewards meeting	6:00 pm

### OFFICERS BRANCH 111

<b>PRESIDENT</b> Mike Miller
<b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b> Kirk McLaughlin
<b>TREASURER</b> Mike Madsen
<b>SECRETARY</b> Sharla Groves
<b>SGT-AT-ARMS</b> Michael Wahlquist
<b>MBA &amp; COMPENSATION</b> Jimmy Kerekes (254-2860)
<b>TRUSTEES</b> Barrie Frankland Joan Larsen John Groves
<b>SAFETY &amp; HEALTH</b> Arlynn Venema
<b>LEGISLATIVE</b> Phillip Rodriguez
<b>HEALTH BENEFITS</b> Brigham Young (969-9343)
<b>DIRECTOR OF RETIREES</b> Joe Zabriskie 973-6705 or 968-4208)

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Branch 111 Website  
[Branch111.com](http://Branch111.com)

National Association  
Of  
Letter Carriers  
Branch 111

**Branch 111 Vision Statement**  
Branch 111 will achieve solidarity through strength. Our strength will be the result of empowering our leaders and members through education, training, and involvement. We recognize our obligations as we embrace the principles of integrity, open communication, and unity.