



The Pavement Pounder

Branch 111 NALC

“The Wasatch Branch”

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edition

The President's Report

The Final Heat

Utah just had its warmest winter on record, and set all kinds of records in March, including the earliest 80 degree temperature in the history of Salt Lake City. By all accounts, this summer will be a brutally hot one. The following article is not new, but the information contained within is vital for our members to have, so once again we will be talking about heat safety, and once again I will be starting off with a quote from “The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge... my favorite poem:

*Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.*

In this famous poem, the crew of an ill-fated ship find themselves stuck in the “doldrums” (stuck on a still sea with no wind with which to move their vessel). They run out of water and are stuck baking in the hot sun for weeks until they finally succumb to dehydration and all drop dead (except for the narrator/protagonist who lives to tell the tale). If you haven’t read it, it is not a “happy ending” poem, but rather a poem that seeks to teach a life lesson, or to warn of possible life-consequences, by the telling of a tragedy.

During the first 30+ years of my career, I heard stand-up after stand-up where we were cautioned to avoid all symptoms of heat related illness. We were told that if we did feel any symptoms coming on, we were to immediately hydrate with water, seek shade or air-conditioning, and take an extra break for our safety and health. We were told to always make sure we had an adequate supply of water with us, and to drink copiously from it, and to dump some of it on our heads when we need to. We were told that if we ran out of water, or found ourselves without sufficient water, to immediately take the steps necessary to obtain water.

In 2017, for the first time in my experience, we began to have some trouble between Craft and Management re-

garding the instructions about “water”. There were many disputes, but the most serious concern was whether a Letter Carrier, who found themselves without water “for any reason”, could obtain additional water. I do not need to go into the many reasons for which someone could find themselves without water, it has happened to me on several occasions, and I am sure it happens to all of us from time to time. The problem arose because management was giving bad (and potentially dangerous) instructions about water. Some members of management stated that Letter Carriers should never find themselves without water (presumably because they should always be prepared for any contingency), so getting water should never be an issue. I find that kind of logic to be disingenuous, naïve, and flawed, because running out of water does happen, and it will happen to everyone eventually. So, after several failed attempts to explain this to Management, and to get a definitive answer regarding whether a Carrier could deviate to obtain water when necessary, I was forced to write an open letter to the District Manager at that time (Darrell Stoke) which stated in part:

“I have asked you and the numerous other EAS employees that I have encountered in the Downtown office to give the following instruction: “If you [Letter Carriers] find yourselves without water FOR ANY REASON, immediately procure water sufficient for your needs.” ...

... “Since management has declined to give this instruction, I find that I must get the word out, so this open letter will be published in our branch newsletter, and I am saying to all Letter Carriers, “If you [Letter Carriers] find yourselves without water FOR ANY REASON, immediately procure water sufficient for your needs.” The Union will be happy to defend any Letter Carrier who is disciplined for procuring water when it is necessary for their safety.”

After that letter, the Union resolved a grievance with the following language [in part]: “Any management employees that have told employees that they cannot have water will be instsist. Management will be told employees in the heat cannot be denied water.”

I have had numerous conversations with management about heat-safety, and potable water issues. Since the

(water continued)
grievances and OSHA complaints of 2017, management and the Union have been in complete agreement regarding water. In the past, management has stated that bottled water is being provided in all Salt Lake City Installation offices (and I believe all the Associate Offices are providing bottled water as well, please let me know if that stops being the case, or isn't the case). Management has stated that Carriers are being instructed to obtain water sufficient for their needs anytime they find themselves without water. Management has also stated that if anyone finds that they are having heat-related illness (for example, being unable to continue delivering due to heat-related symptoms), they should call 911, or call their Manager/Supervisor for assistance, whichever they deem expedient and appropriate. In the past, management has agreed (regarding heat-related illness, heat stress, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke), that while every case is subjective, the Postal Service will make every effort to err on the side of caution, by calling 911, providing rides to the Hospital, or making sure Letter Carriers are checked out by medical professionals after having on-the-job heat-related illness

(all of the aforementioned to be done when appropriate... every situation is unique).

The bottom line is that both the Postal Service, and Letter Carriers should take Heat Safety seriously. It is my fervent hope that Management and Letter Carriers will use their best judgement in dealing with both heat and hydration. The hierarchy of importance is: Health, Family, and then Job. Remember, you won't have a job if you don't protect your health, and you won't want a job if you have to sacrifice your family to keep it.

It is expected that this will be a long, hot Summer. Water is good. Gatorade is good. Wet towels on the neck, wet hats, sweating, fans, shade, air-conditioning, and an extra break if necessary are all good. Please take care of your health this summer by taking the steps necessary to keep yourselves hydrated and not over-heated.

Thank you for protecting yourself during the summer to come, and please have a safe Summer!

Michael Wahlquist – President
Branch 111, NALC



Knowledge is Power: Why Training Matters for Every Carrier

Knowledge is the most powerful tool a letter carrier can carry. Whether you've been on the job for twenty years or twenty days, understanding the National Agreement and our workplace rights is what keeps us protected from management's shenanigans.

In the fast-paced environment of the postal floor, it's easy to feel like we're just moving mail and meeting numbers. But behind every route and every parcel is a set of rights and protections that generations of carriers fought to secure. Those rights only stay strong if we know how to use them.

For Our Stewards: Sharpening the Tools
Being a steward isn't just about having a title; it's about being the first line of defense for our brothers and sisters. Management is constantly updated on new policies and tech—we have to stay one step ahead. Attending regular training ensures that our grievances are airtight, our arguments are backed by the latest settlements, and our branch remains a force to be reckoned with.

Remember: A well-trained steward doesn't just solve problems; they prevent them.

For Every Member: Know Your Rights
You don't have to be a steward to be educated. In fact, the more our "rank and file" members know, the stronger we are as a whole. When you understand your rights regarding overtime, safety, and much more, you can't be

misled by management. Education gives you the confidence to speak up when something isn't right and the clarity to know exactly when to call for a steward.

Mark Your Calendars: Upcoming Training Opportunities

We want every member of this branch to be as informed as possible. We have two recurring opportunities for you to get involved and get educated:

- **Branch Steward Training:** Held every **3rd Wednesday of the month**. This is the place to dive deep into the contract and discuss local issues. (link available on the branch111 website)
- **Utah State Association Training Zoom:** Held every **4th Wednesday of the month**. This is a hosted via Zoom for **anyone in the state of Utah**. It's a great way to connect with carriers across the state, ask questions, and connect with our state officers.

Don't wait until you're facing a Management Investigation (MI) to learn what the contract says. Whether you want to become a leader in the branch or just want to protect your own career, we hope to see you at the next training session.

Unity starts with education!

In solidarity,
Destiney Carrillo
Vice President
Branch 111



IMPROVING BRANCH COMMUNICATIONS

Branch 111 currently has between 800 and 900 active members, along with another 200 to 300 retirees. With a membership of this size, how we communicate and keep everyone informed is something that I think about constantly.

When we look at the ways we have traditionally communicated with the membership, we see both valuable outlets and clear gaps in our reach.

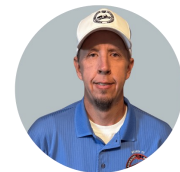
- **Branch Meetings:** Attending our monthly meetings is a fantastic way to keep up to date on the immediate issues we face. However, with an average of 70 to 100 members attending in person and via Zoom, we are reaching less than 10% of our membership.
- **The Pavement Pounder:** This remains a vital platform for officers to share deep insights and promote upcoming events. We deliver it directly into 100% of our members' mailboxes every month. Though we ultimately cannot track exactly how many members read it cover to cover.
- **Digital Upgrades:** Over the last couple of years, we've expanded our digital footprint. The **NALC Branch 111 Facebook page** has been great for rapid updates, though it currently sits at 241 members (reaching less than 25% of the branch). Meanwhile, our revamped website, **Branch111.com** continues to serve as an excellent place for members seeking specific resources and information.

Moving forward, my goal is to broaden our reach through several new ideas, while continuing to grow our meeting attendance and Facebook engagement.

- **Regular Station Visits:** I intend to challenge all of our branch officers to participate in regular station visits. I firmly believe that our President, Vice Presidents, OWCP, MDA, Health Benefits, Safety, Veteran Affairs, and Director of Retirees all possess valuable knowledge. We need to bring that expertise directly to the workroom floor where you are.
- **Zone-Specific Group Chat Threads:** I am encouraging our shop stewards to establish group chat threads within their individual zones. The ability for a steward to instantly reach their entire zone all at once is an incredibly powerful tool. Furthermore, it creates a space where carriers can lean on each other, ask questions, and report issues to their steward. I will join whatever groups will have me. We have already seen this work with great success in several zones and stations.
- **A Dedicated Branch Email List:** Finally, I want to establish an official branch email list for members who want to opt-in to receive direct digital updates. This will allow us to send timely, critical information right to your inbox.

Please watch for more information coming soon on how to securely submit your email address to the new list. I truly believe staying connected and keeping each other in the loop will only make us stronger as a branch.

In Solidarity,
Mike Hansen
Executive Vice President
Branch 111, NALC



Mental Health Awareness

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. As employees of the USPS, we have access to the Employee Assistance Program, or EAP.

EAP program can be a powerful tool for those of us who benefit from focusing on our mental health. If you visit EAP4YOU.COM, you will find a wealth of resources that can greatly improve your mental health. These services include:

- Educational materials and articles
- Self-assessment tools and calculators
- Webinars
- Online therapy
- Live chat
- Information & resources addressing specific issues
- Around the clock support
- Digital wellness tools
- Consultant/Clinician Finder
- Diet and nutrition
- Par-

enting, childcare and eldercare • Personal & professional development • Stress and anger • Time management • Anxiety and depression Tools & calculators: • Health • Fitness • Mental health & more.

I encourage everyone to familiarize yourself with EAP and be aware of its value and how to access it. You can also call 1-800-EAP4YOU (800-327-4968). If you or a loved one is experiencing crisis or need help, you can call and trained therapists will assist you. Also, there is a national lifeline you can call for suicide prevention. **Dial 988** or text for immediate help.

Take Care of Each Other
Nate Chester
Subbing in Safety and Health
Editor



What you need to know about login.gov. and or id.me

The login.gov or the id.me websites are how the federal government's various websites are now accessed. I will concentrate on login.gov as the more popular of these 2 websites. Services accessible include the Office of Personnel Management or O.P.M., Social Security, Medicare, the Veterans Administration, and many other federal agencies that provide services to the public. It only takes a few minutes to sign up, create a password or passkey, and verify your identity. Simply google login.gov and follow the instructions to create your account. For those of us who are retired, O.P.M. is a vital resource. You can use it to view your annuity documents and current payments, update your personal information, such as mailing addresses, email, phone numbers and tax deductions, establish payroll deductions for things like L.C.P.F., or other financial obligations and obtain documents for tax filing and returns. The latter has been the most common way many people use it.

The Federal Government made a decision late last year that it would no longer automatically mail form 1099r records that retirees must have to complete their taxes. If the annuitant has an email address that they provided to O.P.M., they sent a link to obtain the document. The trouble is that many people either did not receive this email or it was filtered to their spam folder. This led to many retirees waiting for their 1099r , una-

ware that they had to access the document via the O.P.M. website. This led to the complication that many had not established a login.gov account. This caused a lot of confusion and frustration for many retirees. Branch officers spent a lot of time assisting with establishing login.gov accounts for members.

For active carriers who are considering retirement plans in the near future, the Postal Service now requires that retirement applications must be submitted directly to O.P.M. To do so the retiring carrier must establish a login.gov account. If you need to view and verify Social Security information and benefits you must have a login.gov account. Carriers who are veterans, who need to access their benefits and records, schedule health care appointments, apply for education benefits, and view their military annuity need a login.gov account. If you need access to your Social Security records or benefits you need a login.gov account. Ditto for Medicare. In short it is an almost universal requirement for you to access various government agencies. If you don't yet have a login.gov account take a few minutes to set one up. If you have an existing account take a moment to visit the site and make sure that it is active and that your account is updated. Unfortunately, it's going to be the easiest and most common way to access your benefits going forward, given that the Federal Government has eschewed the practice of sending mail via our Postal Service.

Jeff Asay -

Director of Retirees



NALC BRANCH 111

Minutes of the Regular Union Meeting May 14, 2026

● Meeting Convened at 6:31 pm

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

Conducting: Mike Hansen, Executive Vice President

Pledge of Allegiance conducted by Mike Simonsen

Moment of Silence for Richard Franz who passed away.

Roll Call by Steve McNees

Minutes of the April Union Meeting were posted. With no objection the minutes will be filed for future reference.

Reading of the Communications by Steve McNees

● June 3rd is the 11th Annual Utah Labor Community Services Golf Tournament. Registration is \$187.50 per per-

son by May 25th.

Application for Membership by Mike Hansen

● Jefferson Martin, Sara Sanchez, Talialia'i Wihongi, Jamie Merrill, Shera Warde, Stuart Hillam, Chevet Richards, Matthew Otis, Cassidy Heid, John Diaz, Jeffrey Ingleby, Jeffrey Tinsley, Ronald Stuits, Lawrence Gillis, James Abbott, Adrianna Sneed, Gretchen Wheeler, Emily Nuttall, Tiffany Warner, Ariaiah Roth.

Tiffany Warner was sworn in by Mike Hansen

GUEST SPEAKERS:

● **Lannie Chapman** is running for S.L.Co. Clerk. She is a friend of Letter Carriers. She has served as County Clerk for 3½ years and is running again. ● Over 90% of people who participate in county elections, vote using mail in ballots. Mail in voting helps to make elections affordable, for which she thanked us. If we went to in-person voting

Minutes (continued)

voting only, it would cost the county millions of dollars more. • Senate bill 153 changed the privacy rules regarding voter registration information to public and protected. Everyone's public information includes name, address, age, political affiliation, and voting history (but not who/what you voted for) is available to anyone paying \$1,000. Utah vote counting changed to a ballot-in-hand state (it has to be received/in hand, by 7:00pm of election night to count (mailing date doesn't matter anymore). • Get more info at "saltlakecounty.gov/clerk".

• **Silvia Catten** is running for Utah State Senate District 13 (middle of the valley). • She is currently on the Millcreek City Council (for the last 9 years). Water is her first priority, then public schools, and affordability overall (particularly housing). • She was raised by a single working mom in Provo. She grew up in the working class.

• **Jen Dailey-Provost** (aka JDP) is the House Minority Whip, running again for House District 22. She is a union member and teaches at the university level. • She believes in worker rights and has run Labor friendly bills in the House. • She has tried to fight back on Utah being one of the worst examples of a workers' rights state. • The most effective thing we can do is have our boots on the ground. Reach out to each representative about our issues. Call them and let them know what you want and need from government.

• **Mike Caref** is the NBA of Region 3 (Illinois) and is running for President of the NALC. He is running against James Henry. • He has a website (caref4 prez.org) with audio. • He has a detailed 16-page plan for the future of our union. He is talking at union meetings across the country. • We are losing traction. We are no longer winning like we did in 1970s. He explained how starting pay has been going down significantly. Old pay charts had many steps but it took less time to get to top pay levels. Those starting after 2013 pay 4.4% towards FERS annuity while older carriers only pay 0.8%. The USPS is paying a smaller percentage of health benefits cost. Compared, newer employees are paying more for retirement and lower starting pay with longer periods to get raises. • Career clerks start out \$2.39 more per hour than a career letter carrier and we work harder. • Last month the Postmaster General told Congress that there are two roads: we can either cut services (reduce days of delivery, close post offices, etc) or the Federal Government can fund the Universal Service obligation of the USPS. • We need to redefine what the USPS is. We have to fix the contract and then fix the post office. We can do it with the help of our customers. • Every member as of June 1st will receive a ballot. Contact Mike at: Caref4prez.org or on youtube at Caref4prez. • His priority is \$30.00 starting pay with fewer steps to top pay and carriers should have the right to transfer to other installations.

Nick Vafiades –is seeking his third, and last, term as our National Business Agent in Region 2. • If the two candidates running for national president remain the same, Nick would vote for Mike Caref. • The dispute resolution process should work as it is written. One of the main reasons for our grievance backlog is that it isn't working because of our success in Region 2 getting progressive remedies. Only 30% of the country is getting progressive remedies. The issue is at national arbitration. If we win, everyone will get it. • Nationally Assigned Assistants (NAA) have replaced regional assistants and they are doing really well. Branch 111 has several NAAs. They are doing great work. We now have teams to help with route adjustments. New teams will train on the NERF program (for retention of CCAs) to help train in the region. Hopefully training will be done jointly with management. • We have the most successful region in arbitration. We are winning about 70% of our cases. • Nick's Facebook page: nickvafiadesforregion2nba. Website: nick4reg2.com.

• **A motion was made for the meeting to go out of order and do Business items before reports. The motion passed.**

NEW BUSINESS:

• Donovan Mamo submitted a resolution for National Convention. It was read. A motion to approve passed.

• Nominations for the AFL-CIO Convention were opened. There were no new nominees. Nominations were closed. • Connor Lawrence submitted a resolution for National Convention to pay NAAs. A motion was made to approve the resolution. The motion passed.

• A motion was made to endorse Lannie Chapman, Silvia Catten and Jen Dailey-Provost. An amendment was made to exclude Silvia Catten. The amendment passed. The original motion as amended passed.

• A motion was made to endorse Evan Done for Utah State Senate, District 13. The motion passed.

, GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: none

FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE: none

DRAW AND ADJOURN: 8:30 pm

• **\$50 DRAWING WINNERS:** Tiffany Warner, Isaias Ahumada-Velazquez

• **RETIREES** – \$75 (James Griego was not present). Next month it will be \$100.

• **PROGRESSIVE A** - \$125 (Logen Garner was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$150.

• **PROGRESSIVE B** - \$75 (Melinda Smith was not present). Next Meeting it will be \$100

MDA

Please consider being a sponsor of the Bowling night! We will list you as a sponsor and display your name or business at the bowling alley during the event. All donations go directly to MDA. We nearly reached \$10,000 last year. Help Branch 111 reach \$10,000 this year.



Sponsorships are \$100, but any donations are greatly appreciated. Use the QR code to easily make a donation. I will monitor the donations and add any donors as sponsors. Thanks for your amazing support, and make plans to come hang out on June 18.

Free Event!
Please consider a donation to MDA.



BOWLING FOR MDA

Join us for an evening of bowling, pizza, drinks, and great company. Show off your skills on the lanes and help us raise a few bucks for Muscular Dystrophy.

DATE: JUNE 18TH, 2026

TIME: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

COST: FREE (PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TO MDA)

**LOCATION: BOUNTIFUL BOWL
409 S. 500 W. BOUNTIFUL**

Bring your friends and family for a night of friendly competition.



NALC
BRANCH 111

MDA
Muscular Dystrophy Association



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

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UPCOMING DATES

June 4	Eboard	Please register now if you plan to attend the June Branch Meeting via Zoom. Register at Branch111.com or use the QR code below.
June 11	Branch Meeting	
June 17	Steward Training	
June 18	MDA Bowling Night	
July 2	Eboard	
July 9	Branch Meeting	
July 11	Summer Party	
July 15	Steward Training	



NALC BRANCH 111



Come for fun, bowling and food!
Event is free but donations to MDA are appreciated

📅 THURSDAY
JUNE 18, 7-9PM 📅

📍 Bountiful Bowl
(409 s 500 w Bountiful) 📍

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