



The Beast of Burden



Issue 2-11

NALC Branch 290

Mar/Apr 2011

Branch Officers

President

Mike Coyle
962-7402/ 698-7036 (cell)

Vice-President

Elvis Gutierrez
818-239-6153

Secretary/Treasurer

Joyce McCue
845-9941

Editor

Neal Couey
487-1324

Trustees

Juan Zamora 512-2917
Melinda Flinchum 901-8447
Nancy Guzman 256-9296

Fairview

Armando Rosales 827-1288
Joyce McCue 845-9941 (Alt)

Goleta

Joe Pensabene 705-9462

Main Office & Safety

Hadley Carpenter
(949) 322-3600

San Roque

Shiloh Holguin 450-2730

East Beach

Juan Zamora 512-2917
Eileen Smith 654-8702 (Alt)

Carpinteria

Mike Coyle

Health Benefits

Don Gullette 965-3204



Honoring Female Letter Carriers supporting families ...Celebrating Working Moms across America! Happy Mothers Day!

Yes..Moms are special. Most of us have a Mom and we know how important that person was in our life growing up. Moms are universally loved around the world in many countries and languages. We know the sacrifice Moms make for their children and honor them on Mother's Day. I hope everyone has the opportunity to spend time with their Mom or if Mom is no longer with us, think kindly of her on this special day.

Recently, my brother told me a story of a young girl in the 1880's named Mary who traveled with her family to Wyoming to homestead land. Twenty family members settled in a cabin for that first winter. When spring arrived, only the girl and her sister were alive. The family had been struck down by Tuberculosis. Family members from Bismarck, N.D. retrieved the young girls. Soon, people at the boarding house where they lived began dying. The two girls were turned out to fend for themselves. No one in town would give them as much as a drink of water. They hitched a ride on a freight train west. Eventually, Mary married and settled in Montana. She had a son in 1895, Charles. Charles married and had two daughters, Mary and Shirley. I often wondered where my strong constitution came from...TB Mary was my Great-Grandmother, Charles was my Grandfather, and Shirley was my Mom.

Happy Mother's Day Mom!

"My Mom is a Mailman" by Adam Siple

She is up every morning at the crack of dawn,
By the time I get up she is already gone,
My cereal is ready and there is a note,
Make your bed, brush your teeth, don't forget your coat,
She drives into work and when she arrives,



Hundreds of flats are dropped by her side,

She cases and bundles them,

And then hits the street,

No one knows how hard she works,

Except maybe her feet!

Thru rain, sleet, or snow we all know the tale,

We think it is easy delivering the mail,

Well, the Jones' are moving in and the Smiths' are moving out,

Don't worry, the mail carrier will figure it out,

My mother works hard and I know her job is much more,

Than simply dropping letters at everyone's door,

I used to be embarrassed that someone might see,

The woman in the faded blue uniform coming to get me,

Yes, my Mom is a mailman, a good one in fact,

Yes, my Mom is a mailman and I'm proud of that!

THE BEAST OF BURDEN EDITOR...Neal Couey

The Beast of Burden is published bi-monthly by Branch 290 of the National Association of Letter Carriers. Contact Branch 290 at P.O. Box 821, Goleta, CA 93116.

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We invite all members to contribute material for possible publication. All submissions must be signed and delivered to the editor by the date of the union meeting of the month for publication.

Union meetings are held on the first Monday of the month. Names will be withheld if requested.

Editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted shall be printed for reasons of good taste, legality, or for the good of the branch.

The Beast of Burden is free to members in good standing.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

6 Day Alive and Well For Now....

At the April Branch meeting, there was concern if 6 Day delivery will continue. Yes! 6 Day is still alive and well, at least for the next budget year. As there is little congressional support at this time for a move to 5 day, we can continue with our 6 day delivery service. However, it should be said that the new Postmaster General, Patrick Donahoe, is still trying to convince Congress that a change to 5 day service is needed, as he did at the congressional hearings on April 5th. The chairman of the committee is no friend of letter carriers. Darrell Issa, of California, not only supports 5 day delivery, he also believes that the APWU's recent contract was a lost opportunity to "reduce salaries of the postal workers." He believes we are 34% overpaid compared to the private sector. If you still think politics doesn't effect you...think again.

FSS Not Here/ Not Yet...

The arrival of FSS at stations in Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Van Nuys has happened in February and March. There are currently 35 out of 65 zones online in the Sierra Coastal

District. There has been COR adjustments in 18 zones with FSS. All three machines are up and running. The highest percentage is at 72% in Altadena and Foothill. The average office savings per route is 52 minutes however it takes an average 15-20 minutes per route of additional street time.

COR Adjustments

The COR adjustments at Main Office and San Roque will be reviewed in mid-April to see if there are any routes over eight hours and also to review lines of travel or safety issues. The new 2011 JRAP memo dated March 28, 2011 will allow further adjustments to our other offices, Patterson and East Beach. So far, as of April 6th, we are not scheduled for adjustments. Remember, if you skip your lunch and breaks or compromise safety so you can go home early; these times will be used against you because you have demonstrated how quickly you can finish your route through shortcuts.

FOOD Drive May 14th

As the growing Anti-Union movement in every state of our union continues to grow we must continue to demonstrate that we are more than

just union workers. We are caring and compassionate human beings who care greatly about those less fortunate. Branch 290 started the Holiday Food Drive years before the National Food Drive. Your commitment to this noble cause will assure that the American Public will continue to respect and appreciate their letter carriers.

Congratulations to our newest retirees Al McIntosh, James Weedon, and Rick Key. April 27th to April 30th are the dates of the CSALC State Convention in San Diego. Branch 290 delegates will have written reports about the proceedings in the next issue of the Beast.

Finally, the changes in the USPS are real and sometimes damaging to us personally, as we lose our old customers in the massive territorial adjustments. As the saying goes, Do Not Take It Personally. You will always still know your old customers and you may actually be happy to meet and appreciate the new customers that you now service.

In Solidarity,

Mike Coyle

Visit <http://nalc.org> for latest info

Accepting applications now from high school seniors who are the dependent son or daughter of an active or retired member of Branch 290

Please request an application from:

Scholarship Committee, NALC Branch 290
P.O. Box 821,
Goleta, CA 93116

All questionnaires, school transcripts, letters of recommendation, and SAT scores must be received by the Scholarship Committee no later than June 1st.

Scholarship recipient must attend an accredited college or vocational school. Award winners are required to notify the Scholarship Committee, by August, which school they will attend.

**NALC Branch 290
Donald J. Gullette
Scholarship**



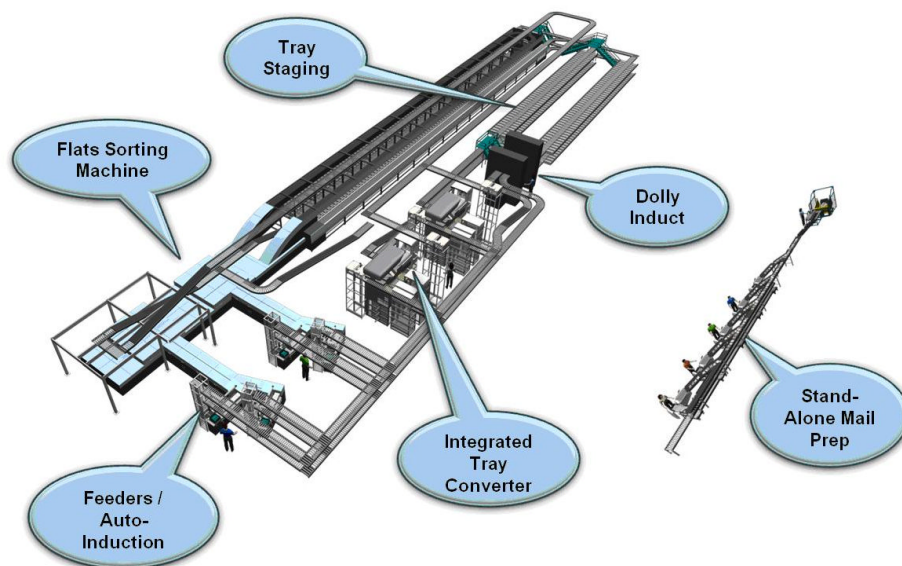
FSS is Coming, FSS is Coming, FSS is Here

By Frank Salazar, President Branch 2902

After two years of delays, the Flats Sequencing System is finally up and running in our Branch. Before FSS hit our first office, I asked our District Manager, Kerry Wolny, if I could visit the plant and check out the FSS machines and visit an office outside our Branch that was receiving FSS before us. I just wanted to get an overall feel for what was happening and what to expect.

On January 3rd and on several other days, I visited the plant in Van Nuys to observe the FSS machines. There are 3 FSS machines in Van Nuys that are about 25 ft. tall, 90 ft. wide, and 120 ft. long more or less. The machines are capable of processing 16,500 pieces per hour or 280,500 pieces per day to more than 125,000 delivery addresses. The machines are basically hands off with very little human labor involved. To be simplistic, mail can be hand fed into an inductor or fed through the use of a bulk mail container, which can be rolled up to the induction part of the machine. The inductor will mechanically lift and dump the mail on to a conveyor belt. The belt takes the flat material bundled or unbundled to clerk stations where clerks unwrap bundles of flats and face the flats labels up and binders down into green trays know as Automated Compatible Trays (ACTs). When full, the clerk passes their hand over an electronic eye where the tray mechanically lowers and moves to another belt at the bottom of this machine. This belt takes the ACT to a stacker, which places it on a cart with wheels.

Once the cart is full with ACTs, a clerk/mail handler then moves this cart to the bigger machine, which sorts the mail into delivery order. The bigger part of the machine takes the ACTs off the stackers and runs the ACTs through a series of



belts and rollers where the mail is separated into stepped groups similar to two-pass. The mail is then transferred to Rigid Conventional Trays (RCTs), which are blue in color. The mail is then processed again and transferred into ACTs (green trays) where they are put into walk sequence order. Finally, the finished product is transferred into the yellow street trays where the machine stacks them into rolling carts. The carts are taken from this part of the machine and lined up for transportation.

La Crescenta Visit

On January 5th, I visited the La Crescenta office, which is part of Pasadena Branch 2200. I wanted to observe how the carriers were handling FSS before it came to us. When I arrived, the MPOO Rick West was going to have carriers collate their residual mail (the mail you case) with the coverage. We convinced the MPOO that it would be better if the carriers collated the mail with the FSS flats.

M-01663 A joint memo signed by NALC President Emeritus Bill Young and USPS Vice President Doug Tulino states that if you have a park & loop route or a foot route or have that type of delivery on your route then you do not have to carry more than 3 bundles. Moreover, if

the coverage meets the definition of carrying it as a 3rd bundle ECRWSS (90/75%), then a carrier is required to collate the residual mail with the FSS. If the coverage doesn't meet the criteria, then the carrier collates the residual mail into the coverage.

However, if they gave us a choice, that would be the best bet. If they don't give us a choice, the rule is collate with FSS when the coverage is labeled ECRWSS. If the coverage is not ECRWSS, collate the residual with the coverage. Remember that this is only for Park & Loop and Foot Routes or sections.

When the FSS arrives at the unit, the yellow FSS street trays are rolled off the truck on rolling racks similar to what the DPS is staged on. Each tray is numbered and identified. Each letter carrier route has a color-coded placard assigned to it: Red signifies an all mounted route. There should be no collating of residual mail. Yellow signifies a combination park & loop and mounted route. There should be some partial collating. Green signifies a park & loop or foot route. There should be collating. Management devised this system so

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they can tell at a distance if you are doing something that you shouldn't be doing. Please remember that all collating is done in the office at the case, not on the street or in the parking lot.

S999 mail (holdouts, vacation holds, etc.) comes in its own street tray, which should be brought to your case by a clerk. I was told that some mail was shredded badly, but I was not shown this mail.

Loading

When I went out to the parking lot to observe the carriers in La Crescenta loading, I noticed a shelf retrofit system in the LLV's. It appears that the tray next to the driver was wider. However, the driver side tray would not accommodate the yellow FSS street tray and three hard white trays (the ones with metal) across. But, the tray would accommodate the FSS street tray and three flimsy white trays straight across. The tray system at the back of vehicle is helpful for storing trays, because it's on a roller system with pull out shelving. But, once again, there are problems. The retrofit takes up too much room in the back of the LLV, which affects high volume, high parcel routes. A carrier cannot jump into the back of the vehicle. The shelf on the ride side of the vehicle that folds down to form a flat surface does not stay in the upward position on bumpy roads nor do the pins used to stop trays from moving forward on the roller system.

Other problems loading the vehicle were that carriers had a hard time figuring out how to load the vehicle in the most efficient manner. In La Crescenta, letter carriers were not instructed how to load their vehicles. The carriers having the most trouble were mounted carriers, because the driver side tray could not accommodate the DPS tray, residual tray, FSS tray, and a tray of coverage on the ledge. They were not allowed to collate the residual mail, because these are mounted routes.

Some carriers put mail on the floor next to them. I'll just say that I noticed some safety violations. We even had a Supervisor suggest unbolting a bar from the floor of the LLV to accommodate a tray of mail. We told her it was a safety hazard and that the bar was there to keep a tray from sliding across the floor. Please remember that you are not required to work mail from the floor and you should try to avoid this at all costs.

Feedback of La Crescenta

I returned to La Crescenta on Jan 12th to get some feedback on any potential problems that the carriers may have had. These are some of the things I heard.

1. Parcels were late and accountables were late, which caused carriers to leave late.
2. Mounted carriers stated that they were extending their street time by 10 to 15 minutes, because they had more places to look (i.e., DPS tray, residual tray, FSS tray, coverage, & parcels).
3. More time to reload.
4. Forgetting to look in a specific place for a tray or parcel.
5. More time fingering mail.
6. Pulling markups.
7. Addresses covered by barcode stickers.

Park & loop carriers also stated that they had some expansion but a little less than the mounted carriers. Let me state clearly that you do not have to carry anything on your arms.

There is no street or time standard. However, if you do choose to carry flats on your arm in a Park & Loop environment this is what the carriers stated to me:

- If carrying FSS and residual mail collated on your arm, there was a problem pulling addressed mail from the satchel, especially if an address skipped. In addition, inserts fell out of the coverage into

the satchel.

- If carrying the coverage on your arm, there was a problem pulling FSS and residual mail from the satchel, because smaller residual mail pieces ended up in the bottom of the satchel.
- There was problems constantly looking in three places especially when the addresses for the different bundles of mail did not all line up for the same delivery point.
- It took more concentration.

Studio City & Newbury Park

As of the writing of this article, we've had five locations go live with FSS: Studio City, 25 Zone in the Northridge Main Office, Newbury Park, 61 Zone in Thousand Oaks Main Office, and 64 Zone in Woodland Hills. I'm most familiar with the Studio City, Newbury Park, and Thousand Oaks offices, so I will inform you about what I learned there.

Volume Fluctuations

Let me preface by saying that when FSS comes on line there are volume fluctuations for the first few weeks. On the first day of FSS, the FSS is cased to ensure the quality, which is usually very good (but, not always). If you get a piece of mail that is backwards, it's because a clerk spilled the tray and manually put it in backwards. After the first day, the rest of the week will have a high volume of FSS. This is the burn-in period. On the second and third week, the machines are in an acceptance period and the week's volume will be lighter or lower in volume.

By the fourth week, volume will be high again like the first week.

Start Time Change ...Waiting for Mail

Prior to FSS coming to the units, the start times were changed to 8:15 a.m. This was done because Management needs time to get the parcels and accountables ready for the carriers, so the carriers won't have to wait around. What we found in all offices is that

FSS is Coming, FSS is Coming, FSS is here!

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carriers are still waiting for parcels to be thrown and for accountables to be distributed. In Thousand Oaks, I observed that the truck driver was waiting for the empty street trays and carts. However, there is not a second set of street tray carts so Management instructed the carriers to take the street trays off the existing carts and stack them at their case. This, in my opinion, is a safety hazard (right of egress) that causes double handling of the trays, possible spilling of the trays, and clogs the aisles for employees and equipment such as the movement of hampers and the accountable cart.

Collating & Retrofits

There is also confusion on what to collate or not to collate. Management has failed to properly instruct carrier, not everyone is getting the correct message on the proper methods. When loading the vehicle in Studio City, carriers found that their LLV's were switched overnight with a retrofit system they were not trained to use. Management tried to rectify the situation by giving a video presentation on a computer. Picture twenty-five carriers huddled around a computer watching a video that they can barely see and hear. My suggestion is that Management get some good audiovisual equipment and get someone from safety to instruct on the proper use of the equipment.

Loading

When it came to loading the vehicles, the carriers had the same problems that they had in La Crescenta. Carriers were not sure how to best load the vehicle in the most efficient manner possible. Again, we reiterate that you do not have to work mail from the floor or under the tray. The Union recommends nothing on the floor, noth-

ing on top of your trays, and nothing stuck on windows. For mounted routes, we recommend on the LLV shelf: DPS tray/Residual tray/FSS tray with Coverage behind it or a variant, if Management permits. If your Supervisor instructs you to do differently, follow the instructions of your Supervisor unless it is unsafe to do so. Do not argue with him or her, and ask to see your Shop Steward.

Street Delivery

The street delivery problems I heard were about the same as I heard in La Crescenta, except that the expansion of street time might be longer. In Newbury Park, the Carrier Supervisor gave an instruction that carriers can no longer turn a letter for a parcel, which is causing longer loading and street times. Carriers in Studio City stated that it is difficult to estimate their street time, when looking at the FSS trays. Most likely, because we are not familiar using or carrying street trays. In addition, carriers constantly state that they are waiting for accountable items and that they are constantly pulling lots of forwards, vacation holds, undeliverable mail, and other mark-ups on the street.

I've Got What!

Management is showing no mercy when it comes to street time. On the first day of FSS, Managers from within or from outside your office are riding with or following carriers on the street to see what they are doing and how long it is taking them.

From day one, Management is alleging that a carrier has undertime. Well, in a way, it's true. Take, for example, a carrier with a 2-hour office time. If this carrier is getting out of the office in one hour, in theory, he should have one hour undertime minus any expansion for learning and dealing with FSS. However, Management is not giving you time to learn how to deal with FSS. They're on a carrier from the jump.

In Newbury Park, Thousand Oaks, and

Studio City, Management is having carriers take swings to the street or Management is having swings dropped off to carriers on the street to deliver on their alleged under time.

The problems here are many;

- If you're not on the overtime desired list, and you will be in an overtime status with the extra swing call from the street as early as possible.
- If you are on the work assignment list and will be carrying off your assignment in an overtime status, call your office as soon as possible. Other problems that are arising are problems such as being unfamiliar with the route and territory of the swing, and the length of time for the swing. When Management tells you it's a :30 minute swing, it usually takes longer for a variety of reasons like it was not a :30 minute swing to begin with.

This is just a brief report on what we have observed.

Excessing

Right on the heels of FSS comes the excessing meetings. Since FSS is expected to conservatively knock out 2-3 routes per zone, the affected installation has need for less full-time employees. As of this writing, I have been involved in two excessing meetings: one in Newbury Park and one in the 61 section of Thousand Oaks.

According to Management's current figures for the affected offices, twenty-five Level 01 Regular Carriers, six Level 02 Carriers, and two TE's would have to be excessed from the carrier craft. The TE's had already been re-assigned at the time we had the meeting with the affected carriers. To say the least, the meeting was shock & awe! As in "Awe S@#!", I have to move!

Lisa Diniakos, the District Complement Coordinator has the hardest job in the Post Office. She has to conduct a

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meeting with scared and pissed-off carriers that don't know what is going to happen to them. Basically there are too many regular employees, so to provide work to the excess carriers, they have to be moved to other offices within a radius of up to 900 miles. Management will first try to find openings as close to the duty stations as possible. And, if there are none within a 25 or 50 mile radius, they will look to other assignments outside the craft, but within the installation. However, this isn't going to happen because clerks are being excessed too.

Ms. Diniakos did a good job in explaining what was going to happen and she gave out her email and phone number.

She also made things easier by having Thousand Oaks carriers only compete with Thousand Oaks carriers for jobs and by making EAP available for employees that need it. These meetings are difficult because of the fear of the unknown. At this time, Management does not know exactly how many people they will be forced to excess or where the new assignments will be. Carriers are anxious, because they may be forced to move a long distance. If so, they might have to sell their homes ...if they can. They might have to pull their kids out of school, leave friends and family, etc.. It's really a tough deal but things are bad with the economy, the unprecedented volume drop, and the mechanization process wiping out good middle class jobs. Although, I can't cover every scenario about excessing, the following points are the most basic.

- Excessing is done by level. There are two carrier levels CC1 (Regular) & CC2 (T-6).
- Seniority: If you are reassigned to a residual/withheld position in the carrier craft in another bid installation, you will be reassigned with your seniority.

- If you are reassigned to a withheld assignment in the clerk, mail handler or custodial craft either within your current installation or in another installation, you will be reassigned in a full-time status but you will begin a new period of seniority.

However, upon being returned or retreated, as appropriate, you will take the seniority you previously had in the carrier craft augmented by the intervening employment in the craft to which you were excessed.

Retreat Rights:

- If you are reassigned out of the installation to a withheld assignment in your own craft or another craft, at the time of your reassignment, you will have the right to file a written request to return to the first same level vacancy in your craft and installation.
- Additionally, you may elect to change to PTF status.

However, please be aware that changing to a PTF to stay within your craft and installation does not preclude you from being excessed as a PTF at some later date, if the number of PTF's exceeds management's needs. The minimum work hour guarantee for PTFs in a non-200 man year office is 2 hours per pay period.

- If you are placed in another craft within your installation, you will also have the option of changing to PTF status in lieu of being reassigned to another craft. However, as noted above, if you elect to change to PTF status, you are subject to having reduced hours and/or being excessed from the craft as a PTF.

Placement Preferences:

- You will receive a list of withheld assignments from which to indicate your placement preferences shortly along with instructions on completing the preference selection worksheet. If you are a preference eligible (veteran) you will not be placed in a lower level assignment. If you select and wish to accept a lower level as-

signment, you will be required to sign a waiver of your MSPB, EEO or Grievance-Arbitration rights relative to being placed in a lower level assignment.

Salary:

- If you are placed in a lower level assignment, you will receive protected salary.

Relocation:

- If you are placed in a withheld assignment outside of your current installation, you shall receive moving, mileage, per diem and reimbursement of household goods, if appropriate, as governed by the Bargaining Employees Relocation Benefits package dated November 2010.

Bargaining Employee Relocation Benefits

- As a bargaining employee you may be eligible to receive relocation benefits if you transfer from one duty station to another for permanent duty and the transfer is primarily in the best interest of the Postal Service. To qualify for benefits, your transfer must also meet two additional requirements:
- The distance between your old residence and your new permanent duty station must be at least 50 miles greater than the distance between your old duty station and your old residence.
- You must agree to remain at your new duty station for 12 months.

Remember, these are just a few basic points. Carriers who are being excessed will be given a 60-Day Notification Letter informing them of the process and what they are entitled too, along with the appropriate phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Reprinted courtesy of the *Mailbag News*, March/April newsletter of Tri-Valley Branch 2902.

What is the Employee Assistance Program?

EAP is a free, voluntary program available to postal employees and their families. It is intended to provide timely, quality, confidential assistance when it is needed.

What types of assistance does EAP provide?

EAP provides short-term counseling for nearly every type of situation that can affect your workplace or personal life. Topics include: parenting, elder care, blended families, marital problems, balancing home and work, job burnout, time management, substance abuse, alcoholism, co-dependency, coping with traumatic events such as a natural disasters or being the victim of crime, domestic violence, grief counseling, stress management, financial instability, smoking cessation, insomnia, back-to-school issues, lifestyle adjustments due to injuries and more.

Who provides the counseling services?

Federal Occupational Health Services – not the USPS – is responsible for administration of the program and service. They contract Magellan Health Services for counselors.

Are my counseling sessions confidential?

To ensure confidentiality, all counselors are state certified and must hold master degrees. Counselors may not disclose any information regarding your confidential sessions without your written consent. The only exceptions are when legal requirements impose a "duty to warn," or a court-ordered subpoena has been issued.

Do I have to pay for my EAP counseling?

No. As a USPS employee, you, your family members and individuals living in your home are entitled to six counseling sessions. If your situation requires extended counseling, your EAP counselor will refer you to a counselor who provides services under your Federal Employees' Health Benefits plan.

Can I visit EAP on-the-clock?

Your first visit may be on-the-clock (at your option). If you choose to attend on-the-clock, the appointment must be coordinated between you, the counselor, and your immediate super-

visor. Your supervisor has the right to verify your attendance for pay purposes, but does not have the right to know any of the details of your session. Future visits may be scheduled during your non-work hours or on leave.

How can I be referred to EAP?

Anyone can refer you to EAP. You can be referred by a concerned co-worker, but generally, you are referred by self referral, by your supervisor, or your union representative.

Do I have to attend EAP if my supervisor refers me?

No. EAP is a completely voluntary program. You can not be disciplined for refusing to attend. If your supervisor requests that you sign a referral form or statement stating that you refuse, you are not required to sign the form.

What happens when I call the EAP Hotline?

Access to assistance has improved with the addition of the toll-free EAP hotline, 1-800-EAP-4YOU (TTY: 1-877-482-7341). Hotline calls go directly to a centralized service center staffed with trained responders 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The call center staff members are not USPS employees, nor are they hired by the USPS. The responders are trained to determine the needs of the caller and provide emergency intervention, information, referral or assignment for services. When employees call with emergencies or urgent needs, they can speak with a counselor immediately. Your call is confidential. However, the call may be monitored by a call center supervisor. You can request that your call not be monitored.

How can I access the EAP Web site?

- Click on or type www.EAP4YOU.com in the address line of your computer browser.
- You can register by creating a personal ID and password to gain full access.
- You can choose to continue unregistered, to gain limited access.

NALC Food Drive

Food Drive - May 14, 2011

Once again I'm proud to say that on Saturday May 14, 2011 members of Branch 290 will join fellow letter carriers from over 10,000 cities across America, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the District of Columbia by participating in the 19th annual NALC "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive. This event provides the opportunity for our Branch to work hand in hand with a variety of local charities/non-profits by collecting non perishable food donations from patrons on our routes to be redistributed to individuals and families in need within our own community. I hope this helps to fill each of you with a sense of accomplishment, community awareness and pride in knowing that your participation and hard work is

truly assisting others. I realize this year's food drive is occurring within the framework of many difficult challenges: local territory adjustments in the Main Office and San Roque area; tremendous staffing shortages throughout our city; a growing nationwide political movement centered on "union-bashing" and demonizing "collective bargaining"; a sputtering economic recovery. I believe an event such as the food drive creates an opportunity for NALC letter carriers to be a visible sign and presence of positive work, effort, energy, and assistance for our local community. It's a very pro-Union day and a reason to be proud in solidarity. The breakdown for charities partnering with individual stations in our area are as follows: Fairview/Goleta - Food Bank of S.B. County; San Roque - Aids Project Central Coast; East Beach/Carpinteria - Catholic Charities; Main Office - Food Bank of S.B. County. I'm hoping every letter carrier gets involved this year by

delivering the drive postcards, collecting all food items left by patrons, taking photos from our stations to be used in the Beast of Burden; and maybe even donating some non-perishable food items themselves. If any carrier is interested in learning more about any of the non-profits involved, the charities are more than happy to give tours of their facilities and answer any questions you may have. Also, if you have any ideas and input to make the food drive event more successful please feel free to contact me and we can utilize those thoughts in future years. Thanks again to every member for their hard work not only on the "Stamp Out Hunger" drive, but every day you case the mail, put on that satchel, represent the NALC and deliver for America.

Scott Pickering

In the News

Oxnard mail distribution center to close in July

A mail processing center in Oxnard will close in July, the U.S. Postal Service announced Friday, April 8th ending months of debate. Operations of the Oxnard Processing and Distribution Facility at 2901 Camino Del Sol will be transferred to a postal center in Goleta. The move is expected to save \$1.8 million a year, but will result in the loss of some 70 local jobs. Local mail delivery will not be affected, Sierra Coastal District Manager Kerry Wolny said.

The closure was prompted by a 20 percent decline in mail volume the Postal Service has experienced since 2007. The Postal Service began looking at cost-saving options in October and held a community meeting in January that drew heavy opposition to the proposed consolidation in Goleta. The final decision was made at the Postal Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.

"We must take action to reduce the size of our mail processing network," Wolny said in a statement Friday. "I understand our employees' concern over this move," Wolny added, "but the consolidation makes sense given the fiscal realities. The (Goleta facility) has the capacity to handle the additional workload and we can realize significant savings by shifting operations there."

Affected career employees will be reassigned to Goleta or to other vacant positions, the statement said. At the January meeting, Roberta Malloy, president of the Channel Islands Area Local for the American Postal Workers Union, said workers could be reassigned up to 900 miles away, which would disrupt families. Malloy estimated up to 250 employees could be affected and mail service will suffer.

The transition is expected to be completed by July. The Oxnard facility will close soon after. "This move will not cause any changes in local mail delivery," said Wolny. "Letters mailed to local addresses will be delivered the next day, the same as before. I am confident the transition will be smooth and transparent to our customers and they will continue to receive the same excellent service they always have."

Retail services will continue at the Oxnard Main Post Office, 1961 N. C St.

Large volume business mailers will be able to bring their mail to the office's business entry unit at 1961 N. C St.

NALC Branch 290 Bowls for a Cure! By Elvis Gutierrez

NALC Branch 290 came out in full force for their Deliver the Cure Bowl-a-thon for the Muscular Dystrophy Association! Branch 290 held their bowl-a-thon at Zodo's in Goleta and raised \$907 for the Mid-State Chapter of the MDA. \$900 is enough to send one local child living with a neuromuscular disease to MDA's week-long summer camp and to fund a local support group session. Branch 290 members had a great time bowling for MDA and all proceeds are staying locally in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo county to help MDA provide services to over 150 patient families.

From the OIG on March 25, 2011

We recommend the vice president, Delivery and Post Office Operations:

Pursue a delivery unit assistant initiative to have transitional employees or part-time flexible employees perform in-office activities including casing and preparing mail for carriers.

Flexible Delivery Unit Assistants

City delivery carriers have office time allowances built into their 8-hour days to case and prepare mail for their route. Based on workload trends, vacancies, absences, and mail volume, the carrier may perform these activities for other routes. A small percentage of delivery units use full-time carrier craft "routers" to case and prepare the mail for delivery exclusively; Postal Service management stated the use of routers is declining. Routers typically case and prepare the mail prior to the assigned carrier's arrival; routers may or may not perform street duties later in the day, depending on need. If the Postal Service used part-time delivery unit assistants to perform most in-office work, these employees could absorb all carrier morning activities except loading and driving delivery vehicles. Having part-time employees case and prepare mail within delivery units could result in annual reduced workhour costs between \$621 million and \$2.3 billion and greater flexibility for the Postal Service. Additional savings could be generated from carrier route adjustments resulting in longer routes and less office time.

State of the Union — Committee of Presidents

March 27, 2011

NALC President Fred Rolando

We are under so many attacks on so many fronts right now. I have to leave later today. I thought this would only be a one day meeting with Kenny not being able to be here (laughter).

We've had a lot of struggles with labor lately with unions leaving the AFL/CIO. At AFL/CIO we have put a committee together to address issues facing labor unions. We saw that all the deficits in the states would be blamed on the unions. And then Gov. Walker came along, thank you Gov. Walker.

There is an anti-worker sediment going on in this country. New Hampshire is attempting to gut collective bargaining. Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, and Wisconsin are all under attack. There is a recall underway of legislators in Wisconsin. There are branches all over the country supporting local public and private sector unions. I really view this situation as a gift.

I have spent a lot of time recently talking to various groups, congress, the White House, concerning the value of the Postal Service. These people have the power to dismantle the postal service. We go to every home. We reach every corner of the country, six days a week with the most valued government workers. We do the largest food drive in the country. We have the first response initiative to deliver medication in time of emergency. We have carrier alert.

There are things we do not do. We have the largest fleet in the country. We could be a green delivery fleet delivering for other companies to every home in the country. We could be on the scene during disaster. We should be doing more for home business companies. With better scanners we could partner with utility companies to provide service, we go to every

house. We could provide banking services to support public infrastructure. We are the only agency that has a fully funded Civil Service and FERS accounts. We have a surplus in each account of \$50-75 billion. We have a surplus in retiree health benefit fund.

We have an amazing transportation, retail, delivery network. It is a business that was created to provide service, not make a profit.

Not one dime of tax money has been used by the PO in the past 25 years. They claim that our labor costs are 80 percent. It is really in the low 70's. We are a service company. We have a dedicated work force.

We have lost a large amount of volume due to the internet and the down-turn in the economy. We have a line of credit that is almost maxed because of our per-funding requirements. We have to recognize these over-funding issues. We could be paying down our line of credit with this money. We have a bill in Congress in support of six day and addresses the pre-funding issues. There are four bills in congress currently that address USPS issues. Some of these have aspects that we object to.

Some of these bills are somewhat friendly. We are trying to work to improve these bills. We have been working with congress to try to change laws and to allow the PO to provide additional services.

We are meeting with other postal unions from around the world to discuss how they are branching out from just delivery issues.

I spoke to the PMG. We need to work with the USPS and all unions to get congress to fix the prefunding problem. We all need to get on the same page. I told him that the whole chain of command is ridiculous. We need to work together to move forward. We want to create a true dignity and respect climate in the local office.

Don't buy into the concept that high labor costs are the problem in the Post Office. We have good middle class jobs for good people and he needs to convey this to congress.

The PMG has started to make changes. He needs to get off the 5 day thing. Seven districts will be closed, 2000 Postmaster's will be eliminated. VER for EAS employees was announced on March 25. That will put us at 67 districts. The elimination of area offices is under consideration. No VER for the craft at this time.

The Postal Rate Commission (PRC) issued their report on our 6 day work week on March 24. They did not support the Postmaster General's request for 5 day. Their opinion is only an opinion but I think it will hold a lot of water with Congress. The NALC was the only union that was actively involved with the PRC on this issue. The USPS did not get what they wanted from the PRC.

APWU contract — We are still analyzing this thing. We are looking at the effects of the wage portions. I don't want to comment too much until their membership has a chance to vote. I do want a bridge for temp employees to become full-time. They seemed to have addressed this well. We are anxious to start bargaining.

Q: Highway contract route concerns that APWU may try to obtain these jobs in the future.

- A: We have this concern. We will be clarifying that.

Q: Excessing in the APWU contract is restricted to 40 miles.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

- A: We are looking at that and we will address that in negotiations.

Q: Has there been any progress on the issue of 41.3.O before contract negotiations?

- A: No, I did discuss with Kenny an issue you had with a route changed by 100%. We have gotten them to agree at the district level that this situation would invoke 41.3.O.

Q: Jan. 10 FSS was put in. Yesterday they did COR adjustments. Why can't we grieve these issues prior to the 60 day review.

- A: We are going to talk about that when we discuss FSS.

JARAP: A new agreement will be announced on Wednesday. (March 30th) It will be called JARAP 2011. It will again only involve zones that either party requests. There will be joint training at all levels. We are going to have the right to have a COR tech in the room. There will be COR training jointly and separately. They may work as a co-COR tech or as the DEAT. New language concerning 3999's. No mandate to do a follow-up. Either party can request a follow-up. The new agreement will start May 1st in some cases or June 1st in others.

Lew Drass: Any 3999 done after this is signed they must meet with the carrier and go over the 3999 and explain the non-reoccurring street time that is noted and all carrier comments will be noted. Comments with the 3999 will be forwarded to the adjustment team. If multiple 3999's are done they will have to use the 3999 that is closest to the evaluated time for the route.

Q: Management will not allow carriers to carry sequenced on a 3999 day. We just recently started using COR. Previously we had done joint adjustments.

- A: We will have a four page MOU, an explanation of the MOU with an eighty page PowerPoint. Hopefully, we will address some of these concerns with the 2011 JARAP. The NALC COR tech should also help with this.

In JARAP, we had one office where the DEAT said that they were only going to look at 5 routes in the office. District pressure caused us to use COR in the entire office. The district seems to be running their own program. They are doing 3999's and using these as the basis of street time during FSS adjustments and carriers are facing discipline if they deviate from these 99 times.

Q: Do we have a specific time frame for this new JARAP.

- A: March/April and April/May. We may, in the future look at a longer review period.

Q: We have four 3999's done but DOIS transfers the last 3999.

A: No. They can transfer any 3999, not just the newest one. I talked to the OIG and he was investigating 55 cases of supervisors falsifying documentation. These supervisors are under a lot of pressure to make the numbers.

Q: The stewards in my office would file a grievance every time we found a violation of clock rings or carriers not taking breaks. This information was then shared with the DEAT.

A: The DEAT do a lot of the work. We'll have the COR tech in the room to assist the DEAT. We will get that COR tech in the room in this process.

There will be weekly progress reports from the DEAT in JARAP 2011.

Lew: Think about your LOCS this time. They will have a more important involved role this time.

Fred: I got a few phone messages from

Kenny on JARAP, let me go over those. (laughter)

Fred: Art. 12. There is a misunderstanding concerning consolidation of offices. Management has been doing some things wrong. There will be an MOU coming out next week concerning consolidations and "DUO's". The issues are seniority. A consolidation triggers Art.30 and LMOU's. Another issue is branch affiliation. We have several issues pending dealing with this issue. In some cases we have had a coexistence of the two branches.

There have been some mergers. There may be a partial transfer of some members between branches.

Q: On April 23, we have 3 offices that are going to be a DUO. My PM showed me a checklist we have to follow. There is the issue of using ODL's between office and the issue of seniority and choice vacation leave.

- A: We'd want to make sure no carrier loses their seniority as the result of DUO's.

Q: Is anything being done about NRP seniority and excessing.

- A: We are looking into that.

Fred: Art. 12. Lew is working with the Post Office concerning withholding and excessing. We are close on many of these issues. When you have an office that is going to excess carriers these carriers would have priority on e-Reassign. I would like to know how you feel about this.

Lew: Part of this deal would mean you go as a PTF.

Floor: You may want to restrict reassignment under this scenario with e-Reassign to 50 miles or so.

Floor: Portland...We did some discovery and found that management had withheld too many positions. We are not expected to get FSS and we are short handed.

Q: Does anyone have any information on the excessing of PTR's.

(Continued on page 12)

Committee of Presidents (COP)

(Continued from page 11)

- A: They have the option of staying as a PTF.

Floor: e-Reassign people may already have a hardship reason for being on e-Reassign and that should be considered.

Floor: I don't think it would be fair to allow bumping of e-Reassign people.

Floor: Instead of doing e-Reassign why not allow someone to request a transfer to an office within 50 miles of a certain office.

Fred: There will be a new MEMO next week on route structure. It will be a voluntary local initiative to develop different alternative route structures. These will then be sent to the national level for approval. There will be some guidance on how to proceed with this process from the national.

What extent do we want to be involved with Art. 8 issues in the office. We are going to allow the joint voluntary administration of Art. 8. I would not be involved in this in an office that is understaffed.

Q: We had this in Connecticut. The problem we had was that management stopped getting the time we were allowed to work on this on a daily basis.

- In JARAP 2011 (April, May), management will be required to post the previous days volume on a daily basis.

Q: With a joint Art. 8, are we going to have to agree on a Window of Operation.

- A: We have the problem of stating that you can do whatever you want but do not violate Art. 8 and if they say we have a Window and we will need to violate Art. 8, it won't work in that office.

Staffing is a problem with Art. 8.

- A: I think we are going to be addressing that during negotiations.

Q: Wouldn't it be easier to count all overtime for the ODL.

A: Yes, that's a resolution for negotiations.

FSS

FSS. The beauty of the 60 day reviews is that we can see what unchecked COR adjustments look like.

They are talking about a second phase of FSS. I want to find out what issues you are facing with these reviews.

Q: We are trying to negotiate with the district on how to evaluate and adjust the routes. We have agreement on the evaluation process. The disagreement is with the adjustments. How will they be done? They are stating that they will do a 6 day count.

- A: If there is no local agreement then a 6 day would be how the routes are adjusted.

The 60 day period is either too short or too long. The mailers may not have made the changes and the volume may have dropped to the point where the data is no longer valid.

They came in and did FSS adj. 11/13/10. They said we can't use Dec. On Jan 13th, we said it's the 60th day. They said, no. We grieved and the B team agreed with us. COR was used and none of the allied time was used. Carriers were under pressure to do routes that were not 8 hours. We finally agreed to a process that is JARAP like and was only agreed to after they had posted the walk schedule for a 6 day count.

We got management to agree to collate cased mail with the FSS, daily. Can we get an agreement to allow carriers to collate this mail on a daily basis? Vacation HOLD mail is not being held out of FSS. If they do station inputs this mail would be out of the FSS and DPS. Can we get an agreement for this input to be done daily?

When FSS came on board there was no instruction on how carriers were to implement this. There is a problem with CASTR supply. Carriers have to unload the CASTR so the driver can return them to the plant.

They used the base street time from JARAP to adjust routes for FSS. Starting times were moved forward.

They're using COR automatic and allowing COR to create routes.

Carriers want to collate the bundles on the street. If we collate in the office they can see how long it takes.

Carriers are facing tremendous challenges with FSS that were not addressed by the National NALC. Many things we are doing are not ergonomically safe.

Carriers are being told that they can work mail off the floor. I told management that if they work off the floor they can't be disciplined for an accident. We thought we had agreement on how to adjust routes after FSS was implemented. But then they did what they wanted to do. They wouldn't agree to an alternate process after 60 days. They then came in and did a 6 day on some routes. Then they came back and wanted to discuss again an alternate process.

Q: When they do route adjustments they take the TE's out. Then carriers are being forced to work OT. I was told there are smaller FSS machines that they want to use in the offices.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

- A: That's phase 2.

NRP.....

NRP

Management seems to be more in the mood to pre-arb these cases. We are really kicking their ass. We have done aggressive training for advocates and will continue to train more advocates. 50/50 in arbitration is not acceptable. We have done very well with NRP cases.

Floor: We want to thank you for putting NRP information out to the field. We are starting to get some justice. Some arbitrators are addressing the harm that NRP has caused....lost homes, credit problems, etc. The search for suitable work is usually an e-mail blast to other offices requesting work. Talk to the stewards in those offices and the PM. Find out what work is available and what efforts were made to look for work in that office.

Joe Brown: FSS, COR, I was listening to some of the frustration. I have a wife, a daughter, relatives who are dealing with these issues. We have to make sure that we educate our carriers about these issues. These are trying times. We have to deal with these issues. Carriers have not suffered any furloughs, pay cuts, or lay-offs.

Fred: We started doing some OWCP training. Something that branches can send people to. Training and educating our people is important.

If we have anyone who would like to help with the CAU or anything, please let us know. Pamela Donato, Branch 9, is coming to work at headquarters.

MDA. We are going to have a satchel day. I think it's going to be Aug. 14. The MDA is going to send us information on putting this together. The PO has only required that we make it clear that this is an NALC project, not USPS. Carriers will be on the corner with their satchels collecting for MDA.

Fred: New deliveries. We had the MEMO. Everywhere where they had new deliveries we are looking at that information to see what territory we should

have gotten and what deliveries we will get back (thousands of new deliveries).

We are looking at contract routes to see which ones we should be getting back.

Q: We have a grievance from 1992 concerning city/rural.

- A: We have been looking at each case (400 cases) to look at the specifics of each case. We are moving forward with the USPS and Rural on this issue.

Fred: RAP Session: October, 14, 15, & 16. We will do it in conjunction with the Health Benefits Seminar in Las Vegas.

At the last COP, I asked if you had an issue to speak up. You guys have done that and I thank you ...and I hope you continue.

This is really a tough time to be a branch leader. There is a lot of pressure on the workroom floor. You have FSS, COR, NRP, JARAP. I want to thank every volunteer, officer, steward for stepping up. I appreciate what you do. You have to imagine what it would be like to work without that representation and benefits that it brings.

We are going to protect the dignity and respect that comes with being a city letter carrier. It will take all of us. We have each other. Please don't forget that.

Q: At the last COP you said that you would have updates on the web site for the contract CD.

- A: Yes, we are in the process of doing that.

Q: Can't we get credit for customer connect leads.

- A: There has been talk that management is taking our leads and getting credit for themselves. Yes, we are looking at that.

Q: What are these smaller FSS machines in Phase 2.

- A: All we have is a test on a machine in PA this summer.

Q: Customer Connect. We are not getting the opportunity to get leads.

- A: I just signed a new customer connect agreement.

Q: Currently we have GPS in every vehicle. Supervisors are asking us if we are going to be back on time. Are there any guidelines?

- A: They tell us what routes they are going to be installed in and in what offices. As long as they are telling us, it's okay. Many companies are using them.

Fall 2011 COP: Puerto Rico, September 18 & 19. Everyone who has not made reservations should do so now.

Breakfast and lunch are included.

If you haven't attended a COP meeting in the past 4 meetings; minutes will not be mailed to you.

Nominations for Spring '12 COP: Chicago is nominated. Chicago, April 15, 16, 2012.

Floor: I would like to thank Matti and Larry Brown yesterday for their comments. We need more support for COLCPE—"Gimmie 5". It's all about leadership. Only 5% of the membership, in most branches, give to COLCPE.

If we don't have the solidarity to face the issues on the workroom floor we are not doing what needs to be done.

We have to educate our membership about the issues and the legislation program being supported by the NALC. Go back and educate your membership, not only about FSS and COR but about the issues that every carrier faces.

Floor: We need to get the locals involved in moving these bills through state houses.

(Continued on page 14)

Committee of Presidents (COP)

(Continued from page 13)

Floor: We need to go back and convince carriers to get on E-Activist and to get them to give \$5 (COLCPE)

Floor: We are as strong as our weakest link. We need to network. The biggest branches need to work with the smaller branches that have programs that don't work. I hope there are no members in here who are going to go back and be a 204B. I am going to go back and stand up to management. I do that because what they do is wrong. We are losing membership due to attrition, limited duty ...we need to network. The branches who are not here today. Reach out to them.

Floor: We chartered a plane from Br. 24 to go to Wisconsin to demonstrate. Last Saturday there was a demonstration in LA; 25000 workers were there and the media gave us no coverage. What is going on is about breaking organized labor. There have been concessions by labor.

Floor: If they changed 9 words in the federal law the NALC would cease to exist. We have to get to the membership to get them involved.

Floor: What we have done to increase COLCPE contributions; we have had giveaways for those who sign up for COLCPE or who increase their contributions. There are laws about this. Check with the NALC legislation department first. We have socials that are specially for COLCPE contributors.

Floor: We open every meeting to discuss how to be a good union member.

Preparing for Local Negotiations: We need to develop a way to quickly communicate with our membership. We have to let the public know, through our membership, about the issues that we face.

TE's: We have made progress when we lost casuals. Every day as a TE, you are on probation. We are holding forums for TE's to educate them and our stewards

about the issues they face. Twice a year we have these meetings. We have a TE liaison who uses e-mail to network with all of our TE's.

The TE's are being told to call daily to see if work is available for them each day.

I have one TE who spends \$1000 a month for health benefits.

Step B Decisions: In our district, the Step B team just increases the settlement payments rather than addressing the problem. This is something I hope the National takes a look at.

Attendance policies: We have had some issues with attendance where carriers were LWOP'd on their check.

We are grieving these. They have attendance indicators that they are using (many are cited).

Disaster Planning: The inspection service was used to locate carriers during Katrina. We are working on ways to contact our families during emergency. In Portland, we are working on a plan for earthquakes. What are other cities doing? In Portland, carriers were not involved in the disaster planning like police and firefighters even though we are in every neighborhood 6 days a week.

Jobs with Justice: How many people have Jobs with Justice in their cities? We have asked JWW to have a panel that listens to concerns of carriers. Carriers told stories about forced overtime, work methods and it gave the public an inside look at the problems that their letter carrier faces daily. The Labor Council and JWW are two things we have to utilize.

MSP Discipline: Management is using them as one more tool for discipline. There is a green light for discipline and steward time

from higher up. I think in some cases 613 time is being falsified by management. During negotiations they want to show how much money is being spent on steward time nationwide, to an arbitrator.

Carriers are being charged with failure to follow instructions when they fail to generate an MSP. If the carrier states that "yes I did scan that MSP", it falls back on management to show proof that there was no malfunction of the scanner or upload. We have carriers facing 14 day suspensions for MSP scans.

The USPS goal for Express Mail is 98% and they never make that. Then a carrier misses one scan and they are disciplined.

During an investigative interview carriers should state that they perform their duties in a conscientious manner. "I scanned that item. When I hear the beep, I assume the item was scanned properly."

We have no way to verify that the MSP scans were registered properly.

I spent 2 years as a DRT. (Dispute Resolution Team) We never upheld discipline for an MSP scan failure.

The grievant should be on 632 time while being interviewed by the steward.

Comments from the podium:

How many members present plan on attending Puerto Rico?

Floor: COR. I hope we have the ability to be more involved with COR.

Meeting Adjourned

*Notes scribed by Chuck Clark
NALC Branch 3825*

This is an edited version.



**Congresswoman
Lois Capps**

1110 Longworth House Office Building

District of Columbia 20515-0523

Phone: (202) 225-3601

President Barack Obama

The White House

District of Columbia 20500

Phone: (202) 456-1414

Fax: (202) 456-2461

Website: www.whitehouse.gov



Senator Barbara Boxer

112 Hart Senate Office Building

District of Columbia 20510-0505

Phone: (202) 224-3553

Senator Diane Feinstein

331 Hart Senate Office Building

District of Columbia 20510-0504

Phone: (202) 224-3841

Fax: (202) 225-5632

Santa Barbara Office

101 W. Anapamu St, Suite C

Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Phone: (805) 730-1710

Fax: (805) 730-9153



A warm thank you for the kind words and flowers. It means so much.

Daniel, Erica and the Parks family

Cindy Gutierrez, LMT

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James Creeth	4	Jeanne Hohly	3
Vito Carone	4	Bill Holbrook	3
Joseph Macias	5	Fran Valdiva	4
Howard Cobb	7	Ryuta Yamaguchi	4
Beryl Herbert	10	Nancy Guzman	7
Joe Pensabene	10	Jack Woods	10
Gary Heuer	13	Jack Puckett	10
Eric Spencer	13	Evelyn McKnerney	13
Ray Minc	14	Sherman Goldman	17
Dionne Van Meter	15	Bahador Jafarpour	17
Carol Lavagnino	16	John Applequist	18
Eileen Smith	18	Frank Holguin	18
Manuel Chavira	19	Gilbert Velasquez	19
Edward Ochoa	20	Carlton Roberts	20
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Joe Grijalva	23	Laurie Wreesman	24
Robert Bose	25	Jen-Ai Mayo	24
Jose Chavez	27	Daniel Cordero	25
Patricia Adger	30	Joe Liscano	25
Albert Head	30	Frederico Ceraos	26
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Birthdays



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- 1992 — *Editorial: First Place*
- 1994 — *General Excellence: First Place*
- 1996 — *Feature Story: First Place*
Feature Story: Honorable Mention
News Story: Second Place
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