



THE VOICE

OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO



March/April 2008

Award-winning newspaper

Vol. XXXVIII, No.2

INJURIES, FLEX-TIME, THIRD BUNDLE

Hot issues facing carriers

By Lili Beaumont, President

P.S.

It seems that my article on the National Reassessment Process (NRP) sparked much feedback from our readers. Many of you called to inquire about its contents. Here are some clarifications regarding the NRP, the vocational rehabilitation process and disability retirement.

1) The NRP begins when a limited duty carrier is requested by management to submit updated medical information pertaining to their work-related injury. This request, pursuant to the regulations in the Employee Labor-relations Manual (ELM), must be in writing to the carrier.

2) Those eligible for vocational rehabilitation are

More information on vocational rehabilitation.

assigned a counselor who will interview you and assess your qualifications for other jobs. These counselors are hired under the Department of Labor/OWCP, and OWCP is not interested in training anyone in the vocational rehabilitation process. In reality, what they do is have you complete a questionnaire to assess your qualifications, and present you with a list of occupations for you to review and select one. At this point, the limited duty carrier doesn't have a choice – he/she must choose a job.

3) With regards to disability retirement – the postal service must send you correspondence to announce their intent to separate you. You should respond to them in writing. You should also contact the NALC immediately. If you hesitate, (more than fourteen days) you may lose your rights to dispute or appeal their intent to separate you. So act promptly.

Flextime:

As you may know by now, management throughout the San Francisco District has unilaterally abolished the flex-time agreements they had with the unions in San Francisco, Daly City, Mill Valley (to name some of the

places in Branch 214). Flex-time was also discontinued in other cities outside of Branch 214. It is a district wide campaign with management using the arguments that there is not enough work available for carriers who

We are trying to restore flex-time.

have early or "pre-tour" flex-time to keep them busy before 7:30am, and it takes too much time, and just an added chore, for the supervisors to input all the different starting times of those carriers with flex-time. So effective in March, there is no more flex-time... for the time being. In San Francisco, there is a citywide grievance for management's unilateral abolishment of flex-time. There are similar grievances filed in Daly City, Mill Valley, and the other offices in our branch where flex-time was taken away. It may take a while before we hear any news on whether or not the grievance will be sustained and flex-

Report at the official starting time.

time reinstated because most likely these cases will go to arbitration like the grievances from our neighbor NALC branch, Branch 1280.

In the meantime, carriers should report to work at their

(continued on page 3)

ALSO INSIDE:

- TE uniform allowance —page 4
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- NALC health plan —page 10
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Branch 214 notes

The election results for steward at San Anselmo are as follows. Arlene Fernandez 7 votes, Gerald Munoz 22 votes. The one steward position goes to Gerald Munoz.

See the complete list of stewards on page 15 of this issue.

* * *

Edwina Wu, Marina Station, San Francisco, helped with the production of this issue of **The Voice**. We thank her for efficient help in proof reading, editing, and typing and look forward to working with her again.

Our Vallejo office, **Herb Mitchell** in charge, also helped in the production of this issue.

* * *

Transitional Employees will soon be eligible (after 180 days employment) to take a **473 Battery Test** to improve their scores. The union has run some training classes for TE's. The application forms for the 473 Bat-

Branch Officers

Lili Beaumont	President
Ray Fong	Executive Vice-President
Bill Thornton	Vice-President
Karen Schuler	Secretary-Treasurer
Karen Eshabarr	Field Director
Carol Maggio	Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
Charles Gonzalez	Sergeant-at-Arms
Franklin Woo	NALC Health Benefits
Leonard Cruz	Safety and Health
Cathy Simonson	EEO Officer
Mike Callahan	MBA representative
Kim Truong	Director of Organization
Roberta Bojo	Trustee
June Buccat	Trustee
Sheila Gardner	Trustee

Voice Staff

Ivars Lauersons	Editor
Gerry Lee	Graphics
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GOLDEN GATE BRANCH
2310 Mason St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94133
Phone: (415) 362-0214
WEB page: <http://www.nalc214.org>
Office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday

tery Test are now available through the union office. Call (415) 362-0214, or see your shop steward for help.

* * *

Revised deadlines for next two issues. The deadline for the next **Voice** (May/June) is the union meeting on June 4, 2008. This is the issue that will be distributed at the national convention in Boston in July. The next deadline (July/August) is the meeting on August 4, 2008.

* * *

The annual food drive is coming on May 10, 2008, the Saturday before Mother's Day. Please help the hungry and the unfortunate by talking up the food drive with your customers and volunteering to become a food drive coordinator.

* * *

Voice online. Go to Branch 214 web site <http://www.nalc214.org>



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

As seen on TV, Channel 5, San Francisco. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton at a labor-organized rally in San Jose in February 2008. Visible at far left, NALC banner held by State President John Beaumont and daughter Jordan.

T.V. 214 Schedule

SAN FRANCISCO, AT&T Cable Channel 29:
Every third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
April 20, 2008, May 18, 2008,
June 15, 2008

Beaumont (continued from page 1)

official starting time, and try to punch in no later than 0.08 units, which is five minutes, after their official starting time. This ".08 unit" is considered, in the ELM15 section 432.46, as the "five-minute leeway rule" which states "Although each employee at installations with time recording devices is required to clock in and clock out on time, congestion at the time clocks or other conditions can sometimes cause clock time to vary slightly from the established work schedule. Therefore, a deviation may be allowed from the scheduled time for each clock ring up

There is a 5-minute leeway rule in ELM 432.46.

to 0.08 hours (5 minutes). However, the sum of the deviations for the scheduled tour must not exceed 0.08 hours (5 Minutes). This 5-minute leeway rule applies only to full-time and part-time regular schedule employees. Part-time flexible, casual, and temporary employees are allowed the five-minute privilege for clocking purposes but are paid on the basis of their actual clock rings". Basically, this means that you are considered tardy if you punch in after 0.08 units (5-minutes) of your official starting time. So beware, for the time being, until the flex-time grievance is adjudicated, and come to work on time. Management's next ploy may be to write people up for excessive tardiness.

Third bundle:

Our new contract now has criteria for which mail is to be carried as a third bundle. The easiest way to determine if mail should be handled as a third bundle is to look at the address label for the mailing code "ECRWSS". This code means that the mailer paid a discounted rate because they prepared their mailing in delivery sequence order and it falls within the criteria of our new contract. If the mailing label does not have the "ECRWSS" code

Learn the code "ECRWSS" for third bundle.

on it and management is instructing you to carry it as a third bundle, you should notify your shop steward to investigate a possible grievance. Page 132 of the 2006-2011 national agreement states, "1. In accordance with the recognitions cited in the above paragraph, effective with the signing of this agreement the parties agree that city letter carriers on park and loop or foot deliveries who currently carry three bundles will continue to carry as a third bundle, within weight restrictions, Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR) and Periodicals walk sequenced letter of flat mailings (WSS) that have either 90% or more coverage of the total active residential addresses, or 75% or more



Photo courtesy Aldo Fonda

State Senator Carol Migden spoke at the March 2008 union meeting. North Beach steward Aldo Fonda, on left.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Richard Beutler, Jr., steward Redwood City, at a visit to the union office.

coverage of the total number of active deliveries on a route". If the address label includes the code "ECRWSS", it means that the percentage thresholds mentioned above have already been met and the mailing should be handled as a third bundle. If the address label shows a different code like "ECRLOT", "ECRWSH", "CARRTWSH", or "CARTRSORT", the mailer did not pay that discount price which means that the mailing does not meet the

Other codes don't meet the third bundle criteria of the national agreement.

"third bundle criteria" described in our new contract. So mail with these codes should not be handled as a third bundle. Instead, they should be cased, but this only pertains to park and loop delivery and foot delivery routes.



**Winning entry
in Food Drive
Drawing
Contest**

Carl Mo
Age 11,
son of San Leandro
letter carrier
Cindy Mo

Uniform allowance for Transitional Employees

TE's are eligible for quarterly uniform allowance installments on the following schedule:

- Day 91 of service: Quarters 1 and 2 allowance installment of \$149
- Day 181 of service: Quarter 3 allowance installment of \$74.50
- Day 271 of service: Quarter 4 allowance installment of \$74.50

Unspent amounts from previous quarters may be carried over to the current quarter, but no money may be carried over to a subsequent appointment. The total annual amount is \$298 for each TE, as provided in the current contract.

Local managers are aware of this schedule and amounts. They must complete a Letter of Authorization and give it to the TE at the time of each quarter of eligibility and sign and date it.

TE's can purchase their uniforms only from official uniform vendors. A list is available from management and the union.

The local manager must collect the following uniform items from all TE's upon separation:

- Trouzers, walking shorts, skirts

- Shirts, shirtjacs, knit shirts, polo shirts
- All outerwear, rain gear, vests, and sweaters
- Tie
- All headgear, including hats

(Uniform items that have been donated through the union or individual carriers do not have to be returned.)

Something to note. In accord with the ELM 930.12, management says wearing a cap is mandatory for all new employees as a means of identifying them as postal employees. That means that TE's in the first 90 days, while they have not received their uniform allowance, should be provided a cap by management.

Management's instructions to their supervisors say, "During this time period, the TE may be authorized to wear a cap and is reimbursed for this purchase according to the instructions in Handbook F-1, section 656, *Reimbursing an Employee for a Uniform Cap*. The local manager pays the employee in cash when presented an invoice showing the amount of the cap purchase, completes Form 3236, and charges to AICs 607-612 as appropriate. **The use of the SMARTPAY card is prohibited** for the purchase of caps."



Insisting on our rights

The making of a steward

By Bobbi Turner, Steward, Golden Gate Station

First and foremost, I used to be a steward when I first started with the postal service. Yes, only seven years ago. Let's say that term was short and sweet.

Now I was officially appointed shop steward again on January 23, 2008 by our Branch President Lili Beaumont. And I was given blessings by Secretary-Treasurer Karen Schuler to represent Golden Gate Station. And I wasn't even a steward for 24 hours before the doo-doo hit the fan.

Wrong on everything

It was unbelievable how management can target you for every little thing, and they won't miss. It was sad to know my station had so much corruption by management that it wasn't even funny. But it was no surprise. And the news flies fast when everyone in my station was coming to me to ask if I was shop steward now. They were asking me stuff that was way over my head, including complicated questions about overtime equalization and vacation bids. These were the tip of the iceberg.

I wasn't even certified, nor had the formal training. I was going on my previous experience, what Karen Schuler had taught me, and what I had picked up at the union office. But management seemed not to care. It seemed that every day I was watched, timed, and harassed on every level, with a fierce attempt to intimidate me. Sometimes you have to go outside to take a breather so they can't see you get upset, or even cry, because of the abuse.

Here to serve and protect

I was being treated worse than a TE or a PTF. I know most of us have been there one time or another. But I am

It's unbelievable how management can target you for every little thing.

here to protect and serve my fellow workers, to make sure that if management wants us to go by their book, or else, then they also should be held accountable. They should be held accountable for their many violations on the contract, showing no respect, no remorse, not recog-

nizing the dignity of what we do as carriers on the front lines every day.

Good before, bad now

You know, it's funny how not long ago I was recognized by management in front of my co-workers. A customer had said great things about me as a carrier. I was really surprised. I even received a postal lunch bag for when I take my lunch out at work. Then, in the blink of an eye, I called in sick for two days and management asked for documentation on the very first day I called in, and again when I returned to work. I was given a day in court, AWOL'ed for two days for insufficient documentation.

Every day I was watched, timed, and harassed at every level.

And I was to be investigated for my irregular attendance. Ironically, I haven't missed a day in six months, give or take a week or two. Can you believe that?

Karen Schuler told me not to worry. Sooner or later they will have to follow the contract, and they will be on the radar from higher up, who will want to know why their favorite station is under attack from the union.

Change will not come overnight

I know things won't change overnight. And it might not ever get better. Right now they may have me on the ropes, but I'm not down. Once I get some experience under my belt, I will be unstoppable. Management will think twice about brutally mistreating our carriers who give their all to the post office on any given day. How can we keep our jobs if we can't even protect them first? I stand up for my rights, and I always have, but for someone who is intimidated day in and day out, I want to be there, to let the carriers know we are in this together, and that I will fight for them to the end. I can't wait to get a shirt with big bold letters that says "PROUD TO BE UNION!"

Thanks to my mentors

I would like to give thanks to Cherry Vargas, our former Secretary-Treasurer, who first asked if I would become steward again, and took the time to come to our station. Also, thank you to Alex Mungia for representing me and giving me pointers on how to be a good steward. And a very special thanks to Karen Schuler, who has been holding my hand all through this, even when she didn't have to. She should be honored for her commitment to the union, and to helping new stewards like me who don't know where to go or how to really get started.

I salute all of the Branch 214 officers, stewards, volunteers, or anyone who is willing to take on a union position in any capacity. Thank you for your help and guidance on my road to becoming a great steward. I am glad to be joining a fantastic team. Wish me luck.

Sharing knowledge

Protect your jobs

By Karen Eshabarr, Field Director

In the short time I have been in office, I have become aware of awful things happening to our members. I feel it is our duty to share these facts with you, so that you can be aware of what is going on within our union.

Destructive management

We have a team of management here that has been destructive since they found their way up Highway 101. These guys are relentless and if we give them the opportunity to fire us, they will. They do not care that we have families to feed or mortgages to pay. If they find that we

have done something wrong, they do not hesitate to start the removal process. We are just another notch on their belt.

Sadly, we are seeing many removal letters coming in throughout San Francisco. Unfortunately, some things are fireable offences. Before I start, please know that your stewards and officers are working long and hard to fight these and provide you with the best defense possible. So for your personal knowledge, here is a list of things that our members are being charged with: Falsifying documents, throwing away mail, fighting, stealing, OWCP fraud, and scanning copied MSP scans.

People watching you

To protect our affected members, I cannot give specifics, but if you are considering doing something that is challenging your better judgment, please don't do it. San Francisco has many OIG's (Office of the Inspector General) on the payroll and individually they need to prove that the Postal Service needs them. Believe me when I tell

If you give them an opportunity to fire you, they will.

you, they are out there doing surveillance and will rat out anyone of us to prove their worthiness.

I realize that our jobs have changed and some of our offices are unbearable to work at. Management issues many disciplines out of spite. These grievances, as frustrating as they are to our members, are often rescinded due to the hard work of your steward.

We are asking you to save yourself grief and do what

you are supposed to do. So please, take our advice, go by the book and just do your job. Management will never be able to touch you. We have a contract, which we enforce. So if you want to make a difference, report any contractu-

You should know some actions are fireable offences.

al violations to your steward so we can hold management accountable for their incorrect/inappropriate actions. If you cannot find a steward to file the grievance, call us. We are here to help and represent.

Be wise with Weingarten

Weingarten rights (a Supreme Court decision)

If a carrier is called into the office for an investigative interview, (which means are any questions going to be asked), the carrier has a right to ask for a steward to be present during the interview. We strongly urge that each carrier request representation. Management does not have to inform you of this right. Once you request your Weingarten rights, management is obligated to conform to certain actions.

Recently, **The Union Courier**, Merged Branch 20, Meriden, CT in their December 2007 issue summarized management's obligations.

1. Each employee has a right to be represented by a union steward during an investigatory interview (but not during an Article 16 "discussion.")
2. The supervisor must tell the employee and steward the purpose and subject of the meeting before the meeting begins.
3. During the interview the supervisor must permit the steward to participate, including asking questions.

If there is no steward available, you can call the union office at (415) 362-0214. But you have right to remain silent. Cooperate with all other instructions. You may sit and listen to the questions, take notes, but you are not under obligation to answer once you have invoked your Weingarten rights.

—IL

IN MEMORIAM

John Black
Sai Tam
Joanne Vellutini

Branch 214 Meetings

Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

April 2, 2008	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
May 7, 2008	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
June 4, 2008	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Steward meetings, 4:30 P.M.

April 2, 2008	Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
May 7, 2008	Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
June 4, 2008	Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF

Retiree social meeting, 12:30 P.M.

April 7, 2008	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
June 2, 2008	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
August 4, 2008	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Erdenchimeg Ankney (TE-Pine)
 Francisco Banuelos (TE-San Rafael)
 Loretta Brooks (TE-San Rafael)
 Terry Chan (TE-180)
 Alvin Chen (TE-Parkside)
 Jinding Chen (TE-Sausalito)
 Jian Cao (Parkside)
 Andre Fahri (TE-180)
 Edward Harrison (TE-EPC)
 David Hickey (TE-EPC)
 Danny Ho (TE-180)
 Da Ma (TE-180)
 Teddy Macapagal (TE-Parkside)
 Brian McMillan (TE-Parkside)
 David Mesa (TE-Redwood City)
 Rachida Orr (TE-Pine)
 Darren Printers (TE-Redwood City)
 Ester Vaughn-Moody (TE-San Anselmo)
 David Xiao (TE-PCA)
 Matthew Yu (Parkside)
 Andre Zare (TE-Parkside)

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*Carlos Lucha
 retires from
 Collections in
 San Francisco—
 smiling all the
 way.*



Photos courtesy Tom Ruiz

Branch 214 & Herb Mitchell present

A Day At The Races

At Golden Gate Fields

Where the Bay Comes to Play



DATE: Sunday, June 1, 2008

COST: \$40 per person

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Admission to Turf Club with reserved seating
- Valet parking at Turf Club
- Meal at Turf Club Buffet (prime rib, fried chicken, Market Street Salad Bar, sweets & desserts)
- Daily Racing Program

**Limited amount of tickets:
First come first served, money talks
and we know what walks.**

Make checks to: NALC, Branch 214

SEND TO:

NALC Branch 214
2310 Mason Street
3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94133
ATTN: Herb Mitchell or Day At The Races

Come on out and let's have some fun with your Branch 214 family

Turf Club Dress Code: All guests, including children, are requested to dress in a smart casual style. Stylish denim or festive hats are welcome as is stylish casual footwear, including tennis shoes.

Golden Gate Fields strongly discourages sweat pants/suits, t-shirts, baseball hats, and thong-style shoes. Guests who arrive in shorts of any style, tank tops (sleeveless shirts), or clothing with offensive logos will be denied access into the Turf Club.

NALC Health Benefit Plan corner

You are in good hands

By Franklin H. Woo, NALC HBP Rep

There are no claims to file when you use a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) provider.

They will submit your claims electronically. No paperwork on your part! There are other benefits as well.

Access to a great PPO network – CIGNA HealthCare Shared Administration Network.

Less out-of-pocket costs when you use a PPO provider.

Choose the provider you want to go to – no referrals necessary.



Delivery of a newborn by a PPO provider paid at 100% benefit.

Emergency services paid at PPO benefit level even when non-PPO provider used.

Lab services with Quest Diagnostics paid at 100% benefit.

Immunization coverage for children as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Adult immunizations as endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to include: Herpes Zoster; Human Papillomavirus (HPV); Influenza vaccine; Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR); Pneumococcal vaccine; Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster; Tetanus-diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) booster; Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine.

Vitamins for prenatal care that require a prescription are covered.

Educational programs – Smoking Cessation through

A PPO gives you the lowest cost.

United HealthCare's QuitPower and educational classes and nutritional therapy for self-management of diabetes.

Routine care coverage – the Plan added routine diabetes screening and newborn screening hearing test.

Services obtained while overseas are covered (i.e. vacationing).

Big benefit by choosing a PPO provider

When you use PPO providers, you will receive covered services at reduced cost. For 2008, the NALC HBP new Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) is the CIGNA HealthCare Shared Administration PPO Network. CIGNA

manages one of the largest networks of credentialed providers in the country. The NALC HBP has expanded their network to offer quality providers nationwide to include over 7,000 hospitals and facilities, 44,000 ancillary and 987,000 other providers.

You may ask, how do you save with a PPO provider or facility?

- **First**, you will receive negotiated rates for the service provided.
 - **Second**, you get the highest level of reimbursement and reduce your out-of-pocket cost.
 - **Third**, you are not responsible for charges above the negotiated amount.
-

You're free to choose non-PPO, but your costs will be higher.

You, the member, always have a choice not to use a PPO provider and go out of the network and use a non-PPO provider. You receive the non-PPO level of benefits (standard) when you use a non-PPO provider. The NALC HBP continues to allow you the *freedom to choose* your provider.

Quest Diagnostics – more savings to you, the member

When **Quest Diagnostics** performs your covered lab services, you have no out-of-pocket expenses and you don't have to file a claim. This program is voluntary. You can choose any lab facility you prefer. Choose participating network labs for a lower level of coinsurance. Your out-of-pocket costs are highest when you use a non-participating lab.

When you want discounts on dental services – CIGNAPplus Savings

CIGNAPplus Savings is a dental discount program that provides NALC HBP members with discounted fees when you use a participating provider. **This is not insurance**, but a discount program. You must enroll and pay a monthly premium to receive these savings. For additional information, to locate a participating provider, or to join call toll-free 1-877-521-0244.

Filing a claim for covered services

When you must file a claim - such as for services you received overseas or when another group health plan is primary, or when you are seeing an Out-of-network provider - submit it on the HCFA-1500 or a claim form (doctors have these forms) that includes the information shown below. Bills and receipts must be itemized and show:

- Patient's name and relationship to enrollee;
- Member ID # as shown on your identification card;

(continued on page 11)

Woo (continued from page 10)

- Name, address, and tax ID number of person or facility providing the service or supply.
- Signature of doctor or supplier, including degrees or credentials of individual providing service;
- Dates that services or supplies were furnished;
- Diagnosis (ICD-9 Code);
- Type of each service or supply (CPT / HCPCS Code); and
- Charge for each service or supply.

Note: Canceled checks, cash register receipts, or balance due statements are not acceptable substitutes for itemized bills!

Overseas claims

Claims for overseas (foreign) services must include an English translation. Charges must be converted to U.S. dollars using the exchange rate applicable at the time the expenses was incurred.

For more and complete information concerning claim filing, see Page 64 in the 2008 NALC Health Benefit Plan brochure.

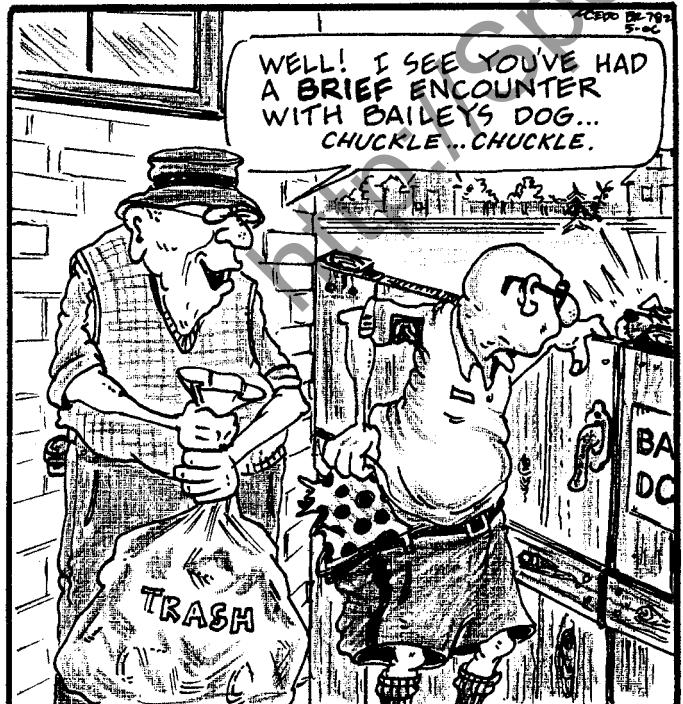
Contact information

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, VA 20149-0001
1-888-636-NALC (6252)
www.nalc.org/depart/hbp

or

Franklin H. Woo
NALC HBR – Br. 214
415-362-0214
(leave message, ext. 43)

OUT THERE



Cartoon courtesy Acedo, Branch '782, Bakersfield, CA

AFL-CIO Executive Council:

Bold action needed to revive economy

By Carol Maggio, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

At the recent AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting (on which NALC National President William Young is a member) on March 4-6 in San Diego, the AFL-CIO outlined several policy statements on rebuilding the US economy.

The combination of the mortgage crisis, wages which have barely increased or not increased, horrible trade policies, even worse tax policies, and most importantly attacks on workers forming unions has been terrible for millions of working families, their hopes of living the American Dream vanishing. The AFL-CIO called for powerful action to help revive the economy to make it work for all the people, not just the rich.

Call to revive economy

They stated that "We need a bold national economic recovery program to change the policies that produced the imbalances that are now driving the economy into what may become a serious recession. Those policies would include:

- Restoring the competitiveness of the American economy by changing our trade, tax and exchange rate policies to level the playing field for domestic producers.
- Following more robust and coordinated monetary and fiscal policies focused on maximum sustainable growth and full employment.
- Having transparent and more effective financial regulation in the mortgage and credit markets.
- Restoring a balance of power between workers and their employers to allow workers to share in the prosperity that they help create.
- Restoring a fair tax system capable of financing the key public investments necessary for a competitive US economy."

All the above is going to depend on who is elected in November. Are you doing your part? Have you signed up for the Carrier Corps as outlined in my last **Voice** article? You can no longer sit complacently while others do the work for you. We must **ALL** get out and participate in electing candidates that are worker and working family friendly. Do your part. Call the union office to volunteer.

Democratic nomination and the unions

Campaign turns ugly/ doing anything to win

By Bill Thornton, Vice-President

The reality is that the next President of the US will be a woman, an African-American or an aging former POW and *former* maverick Republican. It is a huge historic moment if Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton becomes President, a long time in coming in either case. Leaving one out will be a disappointment for many.

Democratic leaders foresee danger as the acrimony increases. "I am fearful; we are heading into uncharted territory," says Donna Brazile, who was Al Gore's campaign manager in 2000 and is now an uncommitted super delegate. "Over the past few weeks, the mood and the tone have shifted. The Clinton backers are as adamant as the Obama people. The undertones [about race and gender] are the kind of cultural fault lines that lead to divisions. It is alarming and sickening."

In late February long time Clinton ally and legendary civil rights activist, Representative John Lewis of Georgia, switched his support to Obama: "Something's happening in America, something some of us did not see coming... Barack Obama has tapped into something that is extraordinary. It's a movement. It's a spiritual event... It's amazing what's happening... I think the candidacy of Senator Obama represents the beginning of a new movement in

**"...Obama represents the
beginning of a new movement..."**
Rep. John Lewis, Georgia

American political history that began in the hearts and minds of the people of this nation... And I want to be on the side of the people, on the side of the spirit of history."

Both Clinton and Obama have similar voting records and platforms.

And yet there is a movement afoot that transcends analysis. When Obama won the Iowa caucus in January (and Huckabee won the Republican caucus), there was a quote in the *San Francisco Chronicle* from EJ Dione that may have described what was happening:

"There is a thunder out of Iowa, and it is shaking both

parties." Obama's oratory had transfixed people to a greater extent than anybody since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Union endorsements

Millions of dollars in union funds for the candidates and the mobilization of thousands of foot soldiers/pre-cinct workers/phone bankers are at stake.

The AFL-CIO has budgeted \$54 million for the 2008

Millions of dollars of union funds are at stake.

campaign, to support Democratic candidates for President and in dozens of congressional races.

The SEIU-Service Employees International Union-expects to collect more than \$30 million for the 2008 campaign, making its PAC (Political Action Committee) one of the biggest in the US.

The NALC endorsed Clinton last fall based on results of a membership polling by mail—a postcard had been placed the August *Postal Record*. More Clinton endorsements: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Machinists, and the American Federation of Teachers—all AFL-CIO-member unions, that had remained under the umbrella of the AFL-CIO after the split that resulted in the creation of another umbrella group—Change to Win.

Early on, Obama had minimal labor support. Currently, virtually all of the union's that fall under *Change to Win* have endorsed Obama, including the 1.5 million-member Teamsters union, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and UNITE /Here.

Old tricks/new uses

In a response to the Obama surge, the Clinton attack machine went into gear.

The attempts to marginalize Obama (Bob Johnson and Bill Clinton in South Carolina, most recently Geraldine Ferraro) have included spreading reports of Obama's youthful drug use, the use of the race card, praising John McCain as a potential commander in chief, but not Obama, and offering Obama the Vice President slot although he leads in the delegate count and popular vote. There is the sense that the Clinton machine will do anything to win. In this regard, there is a history of using surrogates to do the dirty work. One of them involves Clinton hit men James Carville who during one of the so called "bimbo eruptions"—this one involving Paula Jones—commented: "If you drag a hundred dollar bill through a trailer park, you never know what you'll find." The Clinton campaign may disavow the garbage and/or may officially sever ties with the offending individual, but

(continued on page 13)

Thornton (continued from page 12)

the damage has been done.

Mark Penn, chief Clinton strategist, has become the centerpiece of criticism. "In 2007 Bruce Raynor of Unite/Here, and James Hoffa of the Teamsters union, wrote to Clinton expressing their concern about Mark Penn as the CEO of the PR firm Busron-Marsteller and chief strategist for Clinton about his anti-labor work. He cannot serve two masters, working for a pro-union candidate and working for anti-union companies," *NY Times*, Steven Greenhouse, June 5, 2007.

This is in addition to baggage from Clinton 1 policies that were anti-worker/consumer: NAFTA, bills that

**The NALC endorsed Clinton,
based on a mail in poll.**

allowed monopolies to spread in media/finance like the Financial Services Modernization Act and the Telecommunications Act, "welfare reform", along with the substantial accomplishments of Clinton 1 like FMLA, peace and a balanced budget.

"...Clinton knows where Obama's soft spots are; she knows he likes being petted on his pedestal, that he's unnerved by her, and that he can never fully accept how shameless she is. What could be more shameless than suggesting to Democrats that John McCain would make a better commander in chief than Obama?" Maureen Dowd, *NY Times*, 3/9/08.

As the primaries wind down, it is clear that neither candidate can achieve the required number of delegates to be nominated, bringing into play the so-called super delegates.

Superdelegates

Superdelegates "How could the Democratic Party be so, well, undemocratic?" Ari Berman, *The Nation*.

Superdelegates make up about 20 percent of the 4,049 delegates, including all Democratic members of Con-

**It's clear neither candidate
can get enough delegates
through primaries alone.**

gress and every governor, but roughly half of them are Democratic National Committee officials elected by state parties, who range from top party operatives to local city council members.

Superdelegates were created in the 1980s after the 1972 Democratic Convention, purportedly the most democratic in history, to bring the party back into the control of the party pooh bahs.

"If the race goes down to the wire, an elite contingent of super delegates—unpledged party operatives and elected officials not chosen by primary voters—could play a decisive role..." Ari Berman, *Nation*

**Unelected superdelegates
may decide the nominee.**

The track record of the party establishment deciding what was best while dismissing the popular will is not good. (e.g. 1968 and 1984. Partly, as a result, we got Nixon and Reagan reelected.) There is talk of a "dream ticket". (Nancy Pelosi) I'm sure Obama is watching his back.

Communications Committee

We would like your input about how we share important information about our jobs as letter carriers. Our telephone number is (415) 362-0214 and our toll free number is (415) 4 BR0214. Our new e-mail address for the committee is tech@nalc214.org

The Communications Committee of Branch 214, with past president Spence F. Burton as chairperson, is considering improvements on how we talk to each other. This is with regard to information shared from: the officers to the members and/or to stewards; stewards to stewards; and from members to stewards and full time officers.

At present, we share information a number of ways. Our bimonthly branch newspaper, **The Voice**, is sent to all members and is also available online. A monthly union bulletin is sent to the stations to be posted on bulletin boards. TV 214, a community access monthly program is available on Comcast Cable Channel 29 in San Francisco, and copies of programs will be available at the union office. And we have one of the first websites of any union: www.nalc214.org, with Webmaster Spence F. Burton.

You can download local forms directly from our website or through links to other websites, including the postal and government websites. Local Memorandums of Understanding (local contracts for our various cities) are also available. There is much, much more on the site. For your feedback right now, contacts us at tech@nalc214.org

Our aim is to keep all members informed as quickly as possible, and to have each member able to access information easily.

Where do you have problems? Let us know. Give us suggestions. Speak up!



Photo by Ray Fong

Brad Louis, steward, Pine Street Station, SF



Photo by Ray Fong

*Luis Herrera, steward,
Novato*



Photo by Ray Fong

Juan Caldera, steward, Sunset, SF

MEET YOUR NEW STEWARDS



Photo by Ray Fong

Ollie Cruz, steward, Marina, SF

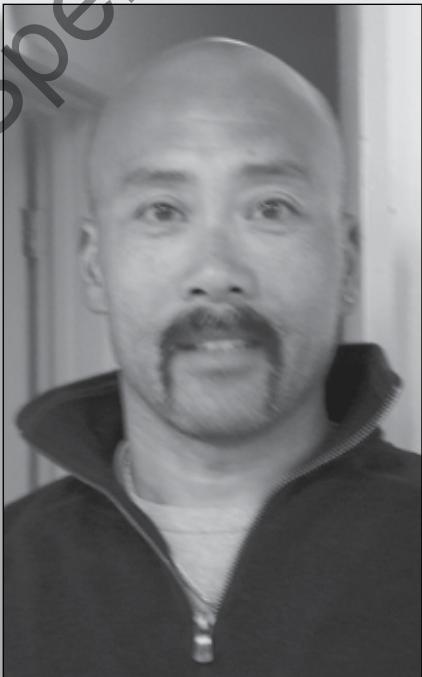


Photo by Martha Raup

*Stan Lew, steward,
Parkside Station*



Photo by Ray Fong

*Carlos C. Ocampo, Jr., steward,
Collections, SF*

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* Denotes Chief Steward Status

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AT THE MARCH UNION MEETING



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Vicky Guerron, carrier and Barbara Ornelas, steward, Station C, SF