



National Association
of Letter Carriers

William H. Young, President

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Message from President Young

Postal Reform Action Still Possible in 'Lame Duck' Session of Congress

Congress adjourned in the early morning hours of September 30 without taking action on postal reform legislation that NALC has fought to achieve for more than a dozen years. A major last-minute effort to push a revised postal reform bill through the Senate stalled when it became clear that several problems could not be worked before adjournment.

Although the revised Senate bill made a number of positive changes, NALC worked with allies in the Senate to hold up consideration until a written version of the bill could be produced and a discriminatory Workers Compensation provision could be removed. However, the legislative clock ran out once it became clear that the House of Representatives would not take up the bill before recessing for the 2006 mid-term elections.



I am frustrated surely, but also resolute.

NALC remains committed to comprehensive postal reform, but it has to be the right kind of reform. Sen. Susan Collins deserves praise for fighting to improve the legislation up to the last hours before adjournment, but NALC could not support a bill that included an unfair reduction in workers' compensation benefits. The final version of the bill would have required injured postal employees to wait three days for Continuation of Pay benefits, a requirement that would not have applied to other injured federal employees. The Bush administration insisted on the provision even though postal management and most major mailers indicated that it was not important to reform.

What is next? If the OWCP provision is removed, we can and will support passage of the Collins bill when Congress returns for a "lame duck" session after the November elections.

Lawmakers return to Washington on November 13 and will work on a number of crucial appropriation bills. Since some Members of Congress will lose their bids for reelection and many others are retiring from office, the "lame duck" session is not expected to last long.

It is possible, however, that Congress will take up postal reform during the lame duck period. Indeed, House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis told reporters: "I think we are conceptually 99.9 percent there at this point."

I will keep working hard for postal reform during these final days of the 109th Congress. If we can get the right kind of bill in November, we will do everything in our power to make it happen.

No matter how many Congresses it takes, letter carriers are ready and willing to fight for reform that is fair to the American people, fair to the nation's mailers and fair to America's postal employees.

William H. Young

Young Encourages CFC Support

The annual Combined Federal Campaign is kicking off in postal and federal facilities across the nation and President Young has urged letter carriers to donate generously through payroll deduction.



He noted that the CFC enables contributors to direct their contributions to the specific non-profits that are doing good things in the contributor's community and also allows donors to give to those charities that are worker-friendly and making a difference in the lives of working families.

"Consider a contribution to the Muscular Dystrophy Association — NALC's official charity; the Postal Employees' Relief Fund, your local United Way, or another charity of your choice," Young said. He noted that United Way, a long-time partner of the AFL-CIO on community service programs, allocates funds to local charities with the help of union volunteers.

"Whatever choices you make for yourself and your family, I encourage all NALC members who can to participate in the 2006 Combined Federal Campaign in support of high-quality human services in your community," Young said.

Simply Audiobooks Ends Offensive Wordage

Reacting to a letter from President Young, the president and CEO of Simply Audiobooks, a nationwide distributor of audio tapes, has directed his firm to halt use of a phrase on the outside of the mail packaging that is disparaging to the integrity of letter carriers.

"I can understand the position of your members regarding this and am more than happy to respond to it," wrote Simply Audiobooks president Sean Neville in a September 25 letter to Young.

Neville said that printing on the boxes was not being used anymore "and we will see to it that it will never be reused on our packages."

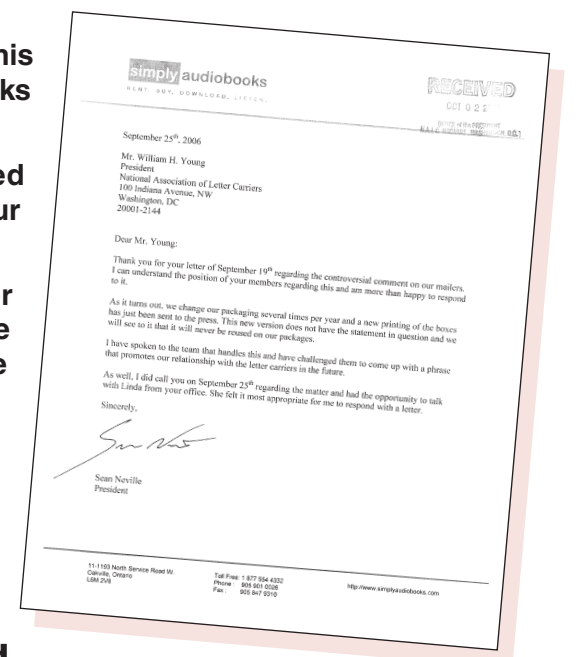
Young wrote to Neville on September 19 after angry letter carriers in Florida brought the matter to his attention. The offensive phrase — among several on the outside packaging of the audiotapes — said:

"If you got this, your mailman didn't like the book."

Young explain to Neville that while some may consider the phrase "cute" or humorous, that mail security is no laughing matter and that breaches of mail security by a letter carrier can result in severe discipline and/or removal.

"I am sure that your management team expects — and believes — that when it mails an audio book to a customer, that the product will reach its destination securely," Young wrote. **"To even hint that it (the audiobook) might be taken instead by a letter carrier or other postal employee is an affront to these dedicated workers and damages their reputations in the minds of postal customers."**

Neville responded that he will challenge his people at Simply Audiobooks "to come up with a phrase that promotes our relationship with the letter carriers in the future."



November 13 Deadline for Reservations For National Officer Installation Dinner

The deadline is November 13 for reservations for the gala Installation Dinner-Dance for 28 national officers and seven AFL-CIO delegates of the NALC. The ceremonies will occur on Friday, December 8 at the Hilton Washington and Towers hotel in Washington, DC.

Installation Day will also include an Open House from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at NALC Headquarters, 100 Indiana Ave., NW, in Washington (at the base of Capitol Hill). The formal installation and dinner-dance will begin with a reception at 6 p.m. at the Washington Hilton (across town at 1919 Connecticut Ave., NW).

Tickets are available for \$55 per person. Full payment (payable to NALC Secretary-Treasurer), along with the Installation Dinner Order Form, must be received by the office of Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broedel no later than Monday, November 13.

The NALC room rate at the Hilton Washington and Towers is \$145/single and \$165/double. The rate is good for the nights of December 6 through 9. All reservations must be made directly with the Hilton Washington and Towers, 1919 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009; phone 1-800-HILTONS (1-800-445-8667). Please be sure to request the special NALC rate. The cutoff date for the special rate is November 22.

For additional details of installation activities and the official Dinner Tickets Order Form, see page 54 of the September-October issue of the Postal Record.

Postal Relief Fund Starts Issuing Grants To Victims of 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes

The Postal Employees' Relief Fund has begun issuing grants to victims of Hurricane Katrina and other hurricanes that occurred along the Gulf Coast in late 2005. Approval of the first grants totaling \$94,000 came at a PERF Executive Committee meeting October 5 as federal and state governments continued to finalize their assistance plans.

In all, the Executive Committee approved \$210,000 in grants at the meeting, including 33 for victims of Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma and Rita. Of those, nine were for letter carriers from Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas represented by the NALC, including one retiree.

"Now that the federal-state assistance programs have started to issue their payments, PERF will be able to move to complete action on the more than 1,100 applications for relief it has received from postal employees," said Drew Von Bergen, NALC representative and chairman of the PERF Executive Committee.

PERF grants are based on the amount of out-of-pocket loss a postal employee incurs after insurance payments and other assistance grants are taken into consideration.

Gould to Retire as NALC Lobbyist

Long-serving NALC lobbyist George B. Gould, who has served as Assistant to the President for Legislative and Political Affairs since coming to the union in 1979, will retire at the end of the year.

"America's letter carriers have benefitted tremendously from George's many years of service as NALC's chief lobbyist on Capitol Hill," said NALC President William H. Young. **"On behalf of our 300,000 members across the country, I want to thank him for his dedicated service and wish George and his wife, Diane, a happy and healthy retirement."**

Gould was hired by former NALC President Vincent R. Sombrotto after a distinguished 15-year career on Capitol Hill, the last three of which were spent as the staff director of the House Subcommittee on Postal Operations and Services.

Over the years Gould served as chairman of the Fund for Assuring an Independent Retirement (FAIR Coalition), a postal-federal employee organization that fought to protect and enhance federal employee pensions and other benefits. He was also instrumental in building the NALC's political action fund (COLCPE) into one of the nation's largest labor PACs. Gould's work for NALC helped bring about greater political freedom for federal workers through the reform of the Hatch Act in 1993 and has advanced the cause of postal reform legislation that remains pending before Congress.

Court Reaffirms Dismissal of Noble Suit

The U.S. District Court in Washington D.C. has reaffirmed its dismissal of the 12-year-old law suit by letter carrier David Noble against NALC President William H. Young, President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto, and 10 other former NALC officers.

In a 22-page opinion, issued September 20, federal Judge Emmet Sullivan denied Noble's motion for reconsideration based on detailed findings of fact and conclusions of law. Noble has now appealed the latest action to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

As previously reported (see *NALC Bulletin 05-18*), the suit, filed in February, 1994 alleged that the officers breached their fiduciary duties under federal law by accepting in-town expenses, convention per diem payments, and FICA reimbursements. After a non-jury trial, Judge Sullivan ruled in favor of the officers and the NALC on all counts. His latest opinion expressly finds that the contested elements of compensation accepted by the officers were all authorized by the NALC Constitution and are reasonable as a matter of law.