



National Association  
of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando, President  
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# NALC Bulletin

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## Act Now!

### NALC Joins 'National Week of Action' For Enactment of Health Care Reform

All active and retired letter carriers are urged to go to their telephones as soon as possible and make an urgent call that could directly affect the health care you and your family receive in coming years — and how much it costs you.

"Healthcare reform is the number one priority in Congress for the first time in years," NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a message to members, urging them to join in the AFL-CIO's "National Week of Action" November 5-13 to encourage members of Congress to swiftly enact health care reforms.

"Insurance companies are spending millions to derail reform, and special interests are trying to pay for changes by raising your costs through a new tax on benefits," Rolando added.

Rolando asked all members to take a moment (off the clock) when it is convenient, and call 1-877-3-AFL-CIO (1-877-323-5246), press '1', and you will be prompted to your U.S. senator. Please urge him/her to support meaningful healthcare reform that doesn't tax existing healthcare plans and includes universal coverage with a strong public insurance option and an employer mandate. Also encourage them to protect the FEHBP as the House legislation does. FEHBP should not be restructured to cover non-federal employees.

Then, hang-up and call 1-877-3-AFL-CIO (1-877-323-5246) again and press '2' to urge your U.S. representative to do the same.

NALC activists are working with the AFL-CIO in several states to mobilize voters to push for progressive reform, organizing phone banks and setting up state office visits with members of Congress.

**"Healthcare reform is not a separate issue from securing the future of the Postal Service and we cannot afford to let others decide for us," Rolando said. "Every NALC member should understand that the stakes are high for both the Postal Service and letter carriers."**

He cited three reasons why health care reform is an NALC priority:

- First, skyrocketing healthcare costs are damaging our standard of living. Our FEHBP premiums have doubled since 2000. Meanwhile, our wages have NOT doubled, which means healthcare costs are eating into our take-home salaries.
- Second, without real reform, our nation's economy and the fiscal stability of our national and state governments will be severely damaged. A weak economy is bad news for the Postal Service, and rising federal deficits driven by soaring Medicare and Medicaid costs expose letter carriers' pension and health care benefits to the relentless pressure of budget cuts.
- Third, the soaring cost of health care poses a major financial threat to the Postal Service and, therefore, to the security of our jobs. Unless we fix our dysfunctional healthcare system, it will be difficult to get the kind of long-term relief from the pre-funding of retiree health benefits burden that the Postal Service needs to prosper.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said the effort will be the largest mobilization to generate phone calls to members of Congress the labor movement has ever undertaken.

"We are closer than ever to achieving national health care reform and providing relief for working families, and we are committed to driving it across the finish line," Trumka said.

NALC members are asked to urge their representatives to vote for H.R. 3962 — the Affordable Health Care for America Act — that includes a public health insurance option, guarantees that employers pay their fair share and doesn't tax our benefits.

## Walter E. Couillard

It is with deep regret that the NALC informs its membership of the death of former NALC Director of Retired Members Walter E. Couillard on October 28 at his home in Richfield, Minnesota.

Couillard served as a National Resident Officer from 1986 to 1994 as Director of Retired Members. He assisted the NALC membership for 62 years, dating back to 1947, and was affectionately known in his home Minneapolis Branch 9 as "Mr. Everything."

During his career, he served as President of Branch 9 along with several other branch positions; National Field Director (now called National Business Agent) for the Minneapolis Region; Minnesota NALC State President, and as a Health Benefit Representative. In May 2000, he was inducted into the Branch 9 Hall of Fame.

Couillard was a gunnery sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps, serving in both World War II and the Korean War. In addition to his NALC activities, Couillard served as state president for the National Association of Retired Federal Employees.

He is survived by his wife, Edie; one daughter and six sons (two of whom are active letter carriers); 18 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren; and a sister. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated November 4 at the Church of St. Peter in Richfield, with interment at Ft. Snelling Cemetery. Memorials may be made to Richfield Foundation Jenny Sandahl Scholarship; c/o Suzanne Couillard-Sandahl & Associates; 7400 Lyndale Ave. South, Suite 120; Richfield, MN 55423.

## President Obama Signs FERS Sick Leave Bill

President Obama on October 28 signed into law legislation to allow letter carriers and other postal and government workers under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) to receive credit for unused sick leave in the calculation of their annuities.

The measure, which had been rolled into the Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 2647), provides FERS postal employees and survivor annuitants — on a phased-in basis — with the same retirement benefit for unused sick leave as retirees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Those who retire before January 1, 2014 will receive 50 percent of their unused sick leave credited towards their annuity, after which point FERS employees will receive full credit on par with their CSRS counterparts.



President Obama signs legislation for FERS sick leave credit.

## Anaheim Convention 'Call' Mailed

The official "Call" for delegates to attend the NALC's 67th Biennial Convention at the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California August 9 through 13, 2010 was mailed in late October to all branches and state associations.

Included in the official call was a delegate allotment card advising each branch of the maximum number of delegates it may send to the convention. The delegate count is determined by the branch's active and retired membership as of October 1 of this year. A branch is entitled to one vote and one delegate for each 20 members or fraction thereof. Each state association has two delegates-at-large.

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broedel also announced an important change from past conventions — a new online procedure for making housing reservations. This means there will no longer be a host branch housing committee.

Complete details will be announced at a later date, but the process is discussed in the Secretary-Treasurer's column in the November issue of the *Postal Record*.

The process of registering local branch members who have been elected as delegates will not begin until February.

The NALC has made special arrangements with 15 hotels to accommodate letter carrier delegates attending the convention. All NALC-block hotels are within one mile of the convention center. Further information is available on the Convention News site on the NALC web page: [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org). The Hilton Anaheim will be the NALC Headquarters Hotel.

## Thousands of NALC Members Roll Strikes in Bowl-a-Thon

### Battle Against Muscular Dystrophy is Big Winner



President Rolando (top left) leads the way at AMF Lanes in Alexandria, Virginia in nationwide NALC Bowl-a-Thon to raise funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). At top right, Dir. of City Delivery Dale Hart is in action as Chief of Staff Jim Sauber retrieves ball in adjacent lane. Also joining Alexandria Branch 567 in its MDA effort were (2nd row, l-r) Sec.-Treas. Jane Broedel, Asst. Sec.-Treas. Nicole Rhine, Dir. of Insurance Myra Warren, Exec. VP Gary Mullins, and Dir. Safety and Health Brian Hellman. Among those knocking down the pins across the nation (third row l-r) were: Region 8 NBA Lew Drass with Br. 462 in Huntsville, AL; Region 2 RAA Mary Martinez (in back 3rd from R) with Spokane WA Br. 442, and Southeast PA Merged Br. 725 member Bob Zigmant at Conchester (PA) Lanes. (Alexandria photos by Joe Conway)

Thousands of letter carriers, colleagues and family friends spent part of Sunday afternoon, November 1, at their local bowling ally, hitting the lanes in a fund-raising effort to assist the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), our union's official charity.

Hundreds of NALC branches participated in the First Annual NALC Bowl-a-Thon for MDA, and reports from all across the country indicated it was a great success.

It was also lots of fun!

NALC President Fred Rolando and a host of other National Resident Officers joined Alexandria, Virginia Branch 567 and NALC headquarters staff at the AMF Alexandria Lanes, while the scene was duplicated throughout the United States.

NALC MDA Coordinator Jim Williams, who bowled with his hometown branch in Vancouver, Washington, said he was exhilarated at the first-year response.

"We hoped that this would bring more NALC members into the effort to battle this dread disease, and it certainly did," Williams said. "The effort raised a lot of money for MDA's work, and it also raised a lot of awareness among our own members."

"We are already looking forward to next year's National Bowl-a-Thon," Williams said. "We know it will be even bigger and better."

**NALC branches that participated in the Bowl-a-Thon must return their official reporting forms to Williams at NALC Headquarters immediately. All forms MUST BE RECEIVED at headquarters no later than December 1.**

A complete report on the National Bowl-a-Thon will appear in future issues of the *Postal Record*.

## 'Open Season' About to Begin; Time to Join NALC Health Plan

### Once-a-year Opportunity for Letter Carriers

All active and retired letter carriers who are not currently enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan can do so beginning November 9, the first day of the annual "Open Season" period when federal and postal employees and retirees can join or switch their health coverage plans under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program.

The "Open Season" will continue through December 14.

All NALC members — those currently enrolled in the plan, those who are in other plans, or those who have no plan, have been mailed a packet of information about the many upgrades in the NALC Health Benefit Plan in 2010.

In addition, the November issue of the *Postal Record* contains extensive information about the Plan, including a special six-page insert. Included in the insert is a page where members not currently enrolled in the NALC Plan can compare the benefits they would have under their current plan in 2010 with the benefits they would have if they switched to the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

NALC Health Plan Director Timothy C. O'Malley has issued a challenge to NALC members to make such a comparison. He is confident that after they do so, many members will join the plan that is owned and operated by their own union — the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

A good way to "Take the Director's Challenge" and make the comparison is to link onto the website of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) <http://www.opm.gov/insure>. Go to the bottom of the screen and under the title "Health," click on "Compare Health Plans" (further information was included in the last *NALC Bulletin*).

NALC members can also learn about their health plan by viewing a new video that can be found on the front page of the NALC's website: [www.nalc.org/depart/hbp](http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp).

**"All letter carriers owe it to themselves and their families to take this opportunity to examine the benefits they would receive under their current plan in comparison with the NALC Health Benefit Plan in 2010," said NALC President Fredric V. Rolando. "With that information, you can make an informed decision during this 'Open Season' period."**

In the past year, NALC HBP has heard suggestions from its enrollees on how it could improve the plan, and has implemented many of those suggestions, leading to a number of improvements for 2010 including increased benefits for pathologists, radiologists, and emergency room physicians; air ambulance service; routine pap and chlamydia test for female dependent children; and immobilization by casting, splinting, or strapping of an accidental sprain, strain or fracture.

Employee contribution rates effective in January 2010 for most active letter carriers and annuitants in the NALC Health Benefit Plan are: active carriers (biweekly) \$44.57 for self-only, and \$86.11 for self and family; and annuitants (monthly) \$147.00 for self-only, and \$299.74 for self-and family.

*This is a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Detailed information on the 2010 NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official brochure. Before making a final decision, please read the Plan's officially approved Brochure (R171-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the official brochure.*



## HONOR OUR VETERANS – November 11

