

# NALC CONVENTION CHRONICLE



COVERING THE FOURTH SESSION: THURSDAY, AUG. 18, 2016



## SALUTING SERVICE: ON AND OFF OUR ROUTES

**O**n the fourth day of NALC's 70th biennial national convention, the delegates were reminded about the many levels of service that letter carriers provide on and off their routes. It was a day for celebration and recognition of the numerous charitable activities NALC members undertake—such as our six decades of close association with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, or our near quarter-century of feeding the hungry in our communities through the annual national “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive.

And throughout the day, those who served their country in a military uniform were called upon to stand and be recognized. Many of them wore the special desert-sand colored T-shirts signifying their membership in NALC's Veterans Group.

Rounding out the day was a succession of speakers who extolled the vital role that letter carriers provide as members of every community in the country and of the larger labor movement.

**United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts delivered a rousing speech.**

### BACK TO WORK

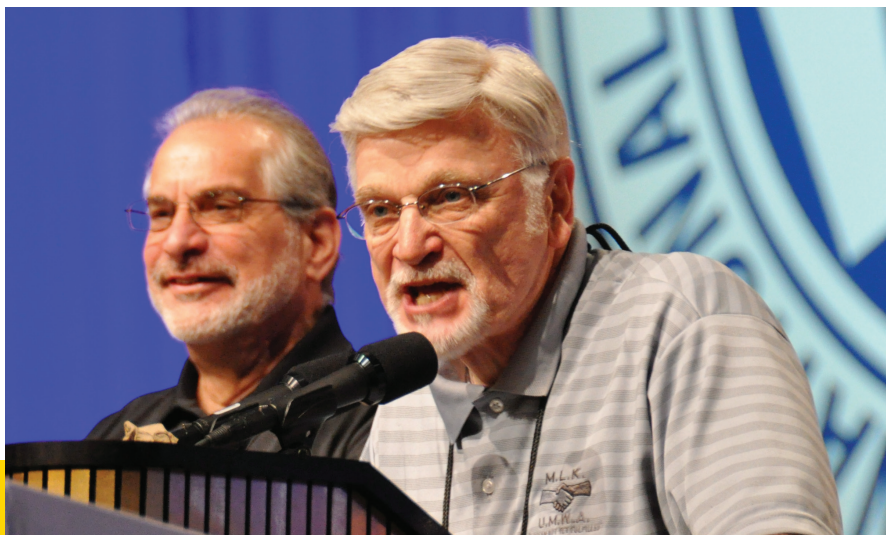
Day 4 of the convention began at 10 a.m. as NALC President Fredric Rolando called the delegates to order and invited to the stage Minneapolis Branch 9's Mike Zagaros to lead the national anthem. Los Angeles Branch 24's Jimmy Cumming led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Pastor Diego Mesa of Rancho Cucamonga, CA's Abundant Living Family Church delivered the invocation.

Before moving to the day's business, Rolando took a few comments and questions from the microphones. Among the subjects discussed were the

**Many delegates throughout the hall wore NALC Veterans Group T-shirts to signify that they served in the armed forces.**

union-sponsored blood drive that was taking place in the convention center; a thank-you from a Flint, MI, delegate for the ongoing assistance letter carriers have given during that city's water contamination crisis; a recognition of NALC's participation in “A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service;” and a lighthearted invitation for Rolando to participate in a “22 pushup challenge” to raise awareness of the serious problem of military suicides.

And after a delegate noted that







NALC Region 15 National Business Agent Larry Cirelli was celebrating his birthday on Thursday, President Rolando led the delegates in singing “Happy Birthday to You.”

The regular order of the day soon followed, beginning with a report



**NALC Executive Assistant to the President Paul Barner**

from the newly revived Public Relations Committee: Dan Garhofer, St. Paul, MN Branch 28 (chairman); Larissa Pardee, Lincoln, NE Branch 8; and Paul Glavin, Nashville, TN Branch 4.

Rolando explained that giving back to our country helps to strengthen the image of letter

carriers with the American public, and that the Public Relations Committee was designed to help publicize this.

“We aim to raise our game in this area,” he said.

Garhofer, in his report, outlined some of NALC’s programs that help highlight the reasons why letter carriers have been, and continue to be, the most trusted government employees—programs such as the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, NALC’s Heroes of the Year awards, our eye-on-the-elderly Carrier Alert program, our fundraising for MDA, and—as explained earlier this week—the broadening of the NALC Auxiliary’s work as a grassroots activist organization.

NALC Executive Assistant to the President Paul Barner joined the committee on the stage and added to their

report a summary of the union’s effort regarding the NALC Veterans Group.

Building on Barner’s report, President Rolando asked all military veterans to stand and be recognized.

## BRINGING THE FIGHT

Rolando next invited to the stage a man he called “the heart and soul of the American labor movement,” United Mine Workers of America President Cecil Roberts.

The UMWA president recalled speaking to NALC’s convention in 2010 in Anaheim. “When we left your convention,” Roberts said, “we wrote letters on your behalf to members of Congress and told them that we stand by you.

“So today,” he said, “Brother Fred stands with the mine workers on your behalf.”

In fact, Rolando announced that NALC plans to organize buses of letter carrier activists from East Coast cities to attend a Sept. 8 UMWA rally at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, in support of bills to prevent coal companies from reneging on their promised health care and pension benefits for miners.

Roberts told letter carriers that they provide a crucial service for his union’s members—by delivering medicine to those who live in some of the most remote areas of the country, and who might not be able to get those medicines themselves otherwise.

Roberts declared his union’s solidarity with NALC. “We are fighting this fight together!” he exclaimed. “I urge you to leave this convention with this spirit moving forward!”

Congress needs to act to make it easier to join a union, Roberts said: “And we will do the rest.”

Roberts then began his fire-and-brimstone litany:

**Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) told the delegates that they had an advocate for letter carrier issues in the halls of Congress.**

If you want higher wages; a pension; more time off; a safer workplace; health care for your family; to protect Social Security and Medicare; a voice at work; equal pay for women; to end discrimination; fair trade; national health care; and a fairer nation—the answer for each of these is the same: “Join a union!”

“This one’s mine,” he added: “If you want to tell your boss to kiss your ass, join a union!”

Delegates gave Roberts a standing ovation and an enthusiastic letter carrier cheer.

## A LONG-TIME FRIEND

Following Roberts on stage was Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), who declared her affection for letter carriers.

“You connect me to my grandmother in the way I know she wants,” Sanchez said: “By hand, with love.”

The 10-term representative from Orange County, CA, told letter carriers that she understands our issues well and often is in the halls of Congress explaining them to her fellow legislators.

“Postal reform cannot sacrifice employees or the people who built the system,” she said. “Postal reform doesn’t happen on the backs of the workers.”

## HELPING OTHERS

By voice vote, the delegates approved a motion to devote part of the collection of monetary donations made by delegates on the floor Wednesday to help a letter carrier whose two sons have a rare, terminal genetic disorder.

Delegates from Louisiana requested help for victims of the recent floods in the Gulf of Mexico region. Donations may be sent to Baton Rouge Branch 129, 1953 Beaumont Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70806. To donate through the American Red Cross, visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org), call 800-RED CROSS or text the word “LAFLOODS” to 90999 to make a \$10 donation.

## MILEAGE AND PER DIEM

The Mileage and Per Diem Committee returned to the stage to deliver its final report. Committee Chairman Antonia Shields reported that



the total mileage and per diem was set at \$10,163.46. Board of Trustees Chairman Lawrence D. Brown told the delegates that the trustees had accepted the report. The delegates then approved the report by voice vote.

The delegates then viewed a video titled “Delivering Compassion” about two letter carriers who have transformed personal challenges into service to others. Following the video, President Rolando introduced the two carriers featured: James Robledo of Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100 and Kim Truong of San Francisco Br. 214. The delegates gave the two NALC members a letter carrier cheer.

## CONVENTION SITE COMMITTEE

Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine introduced the Convention Site Committee: Howard Komine of Honolulu Br. 860; Jim Korolowicz of South Macomb, MI Br. 4374; and Glenn Norton of Las Vegas 2502. The committee delivered its report and told delegates to look forward to meeting in Detroit, site of the 71st Biennial Convention in 2018.

## MDA

The president brought to the microphone Geneva Kubal, NALC’s MDA coordinator. Kubal introduced Joe Akmakjian, goodwill ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA),

the union’s only official charity, following a brief video showing Akmakjian skydiving—one way he is living up to MDA’s new slogan, “Live Unlimited.”

“Because of the efforts that you have done, individuals with muscular dystrophy and the families who love them are living longer and growing stronger,” he said. “I am living proof that the work you are doing is making an impact.”

The delegates responded to his speech with a letter carrier cheer.

President Rolando then presented awards to the top MDA fundraising branches in 2015, by size category: Long Island Merged Br. 6000, \$57,487; Portland, OR Br. 82, \$22,821; Arizona Merged Br. 1902, \$15,137; Northeastern New York Br. 358, \$20,122; Grand Rapids, MI Br. 56; Yonkers, NY Br. 387, \$11,487; Green Bay, WI Br. 619, \$13,313; Fargo-West Fargo, ND Br. 205, \$15,892; Jefferson City, MO Br. 127, \$8,371; New City, NY Br. 5229, \$3,373.

The president also announced a special Gold Prize award for the branch that raised the most per capita: Manteca, CA Br. 4249 (now merged with Stockton, CA Br. 213), which raised \$122.73 per branch member.

With Akmakjian’s help, President Rolando drew the names of the five winners of the MDA raffle, who each won a \$3,000 travel voucher. The raffle raised more than \$50,000 for MDA (after deducting for expenses).

## FOOD DRIVE

The president called Pam Donato, NALC Director of Community Services, to the microphone. Donato said recent enhancements to the Letter Carrier Food Drive helped it yield a record 80 million pounds of food last May. The delegates viewed a brief video about the food drive, then Donato introduced Mark Lowery, director of the Orange County, CA Food Bank, who thanked the delegates for their commitment to feeding the hungry.

Donato also introduced United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) Executive Assistant Christyne Neff. UFCW is now a key partner in the annual food drive. Neff noted that, like letter carriers, many members of her union, which include cashiers and other grocery store workers, have in common their daily contact with the public. “We are the daily face of the labor movement,” she said. “That is a special bond between our unions.”

Neff brought several local members of her union to the stage to talk about their experiences as partners in the food drive.

The delegates responded with a letter carrier cheer.

President Rolando presented awards for the top branches, by size, in food collection in May’s food drive: Category 1 (2,000 or more members)—Los Angeles Br. 24, 1,523,525 pounds of food; Category 2 (1,500-1,999 members)—Central Florida Br. 1091, 2,233,365 million pounds; Category 3 (1,000-1,499

NALC’s MDA Coordinator Geneva Kubal



NALC Director of Community Services Pam Donato

MDA’s first adult goodwill ambassador, Joe Akmakjian, told the delegates about how children diagnosed with muscular dystrophy are living into adulthood.





members)—West Coast Florida Br. 1477, 1,260,176 pounds; Category 4 (700-999 members)—Clearwater, FL Br. 2008, 1,303,559 pounds; Category 5 (500-699 members)—North Oakland County, MI Br. 320, 260,096 pounds; Category 6 (350-499 members)—Fort Wayne, IN Br. 116, 485,028 pounds; Category 7 (200-349 members)—Fort Myers, FL Br. 2072, 294,899 pounds; Category 8 (100-199

**Executive Secretary  
Treasurer of the  
Los Angeles County  
Federation of Labor  
Rusty Hicks**



members)—Charlottesville, VA Br. 518, 317,008 pounds; Category 9 (50-99 members)—Ocala, FL Br. 1103; Category 10 (26-49 members)—Beaufort, SC Br. 3262, 66,500 pounds; Category 11 (1-25 members)—Thomasville, GA Br. 1026, 50,957 pounds.

### L.A. LABOR

The president called to the lectern Rusty Hicks,



executive secretary treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, which comprises 300 local unions in the Los Angeles area.

Hicks noted that among NALC's first major achievements was the 1893 establishment of the eight-hour day for letter carriers. "And now, while you're here in California 123 years later," he said, "the California state legislature is considering giving 400,000 California farmworkers that same eight-hour day that you fought for and won so long ago."

Hicks asked delegates to support AB 1066—a state bill that would extend legal protections for wages, hours and working conditions to farm laborers—

**President Rolando thanked UFCW members for their support of the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.**

by contacting California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon at 916-319-2063 or speaker.rendon@assembly.ca.gov, and Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León at senator.deleon@senate.ca.gov or 916-651-4024.

The delegates gave Hicks a letter carrier cheer.

Following a few announcements, the session adjourned at half past three. As the delegates left the hall, tellers distributed ballots for the election of NALC delegates to the AFL-CIO convention. The results are to be announced at Friday's closing session.



## NALC AUXILIARY

THURSDAY, AUG. 18

President Lang reconvened the session at 10:02 am. Band Director Doris Ulrich led us in the national anthem, followed by all reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lang ask the band members how many were veterans and welcomed them to join the Auxiliary. She thanked them for their service before dismissing them.

President Lang led members in the collect and National Treasurer Pam Fore gave a moment of grace. She thanked the Auxiliary members for wearing their "We Are Family" shirts today.

Treasurer Pam Fore gave a report on the country store sales through Wednesday afternoon. We are happy to report the store has made \$1,347.76.

Brian Wiggins, president of the Washington State Association of Letter Carriers, came in to thank the Auxiliary for all we have done and continue to do. He is very supportive of the Auxiliary and is helping it to grow in Washington. Wiggins also took the time to take pictures of our delegation in our new "We Are Family" shirts.

President Lang told everyone that the luncheon was a big success. The food was

very good and the company was great. We sat on the patio at the Yard House and the weather was perfect.

A Chinese auction was held in our morning session. The Arizona sports basket was won by Legion Cresswell (Auxiliary 28, Dallas, TX). The Miche bag was won by EveLynn Jones (Auxiliary 46, Baltimore, MD). The postal apron was won by Judy Arldt (Auxiliary 111, Austin, TX). The Vera Bradley bag was won by Nancy Southern (Auxiliary 2621, Lakeland, FL).

A delegation from Washington State came to talk to the Auxiliary. We enjoyed greetings from Washington State Vice President Ray Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer Maleah Smitham, Director of Education Sharee Eschenbacher, executive board member Tammy Gatlin, Yakima, WA Br. 852 President T.J. Davis, and newsletter editor Brooks Bennett.

Nalcrest trustees Don Southern and Thomas Young shared valuable information about the retirement community for letter carriers. They told us about all the wonder-



ful upgrades at Nalcrest.

Southern also presented a certificate to Auxiliary 2621, Lakeland, FL, for its donation of \$1,390 to MDA. The certificate was accepted by Pam Fore and Nancy Southern.

The Auxiliary would like to give a special "thank you" to Lesiel Polichette (Auxiliary 426, Provo, UT) for working the country store. Also, thank you, T.J. Davis, for all the hard work you did for us behind the scenes; it was invaluable.

All information about the raffle winners and final totals will be in The Postal Record. We want to thank all of the letter carriers and Auxiliary members who supported our raffles and support us in our everyday lives.

—Submitted by George Anna Myers,  
NALCA Secretary