



NALC Convention

Chronicle



Tuesday, August 15
covering the
FIRST SESSION:
Monday, August 14



Young urges delegates to join struggle for a better workplace



President William H. Young challenged delegates to the 65th NALC Convention to join a “noble struggle” to build a better workplace for letter carriers, citing postal reform, upcoming talks on a new contract, and the battle over DOIS and route adjustments as critical elements in that effort.

“Our routes are at the heart of our day-to-day jobs. The members know that. You all know that. Be assured that we will spare no effort in our continuing struggle to deal with route adjustments fairly—by agreement if possible, by battle if necessary,” Young told more than 7,500 delegates gathered at the Las Vegas Convention Center on Monday, August 14.

In a wide-ranging address, President Young also:

- ❖ described the ambitious effort to strengthen NALC’s grassroots political network and political action committee;
- ❖ warned Postal Service management that any attempt to contract out letter carrier work “would surely backfire”; and
- ❖ declared the NALC can “keep the American dream alive” by helping rebuild the labor movement.

The Pittsburgh Letter Carrier Band entertained delegates as they found their seats in the massive hall, where the conven-

tion slogan, “A Union That Delivers,” is emblazoned on the backdrop behind the speakers’ platform.

The 65th Biennial Convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Secretary-Treasurer Jane E. Broendel, who then invited Stephanie Bostic, a member of South Florida Br. 1071, to sing the National Anthem. Following her rousing performance, Broendel introduced Br. 1071 Executive Vice President Tim Bostic, who led the delegates in the Pledge of Allegiance.

John T. Assalone, studying for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas, offered the invocation. He is the son of Joseph Assalone, a member of Las Vegas Br. 2502.

After observing a moment of silence for members deceased since the last convention, Secretary-Treasurer Broendel reminded the delegates of the circumstances that brought them to Las Vegas, rather than Miami as originally planned—the sudden scarcity of union hotel rooms and union services at the convention center in the South Florida city. She expressed her appreciation for the way Br. 1071 accepted the decision to move the convention, and praised Br. 2502 for its willingness to pick up the ball.

She then introduced the two Co-General Chairmen of the convention, Br. 1071 President Mike Gill, who briefly

addressed the delegation, and Br. 2502 President Jerry Penn, who also offered short remarks before introducing Las Vegas Postmaster Mark Martinez and Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman.

Postmaster Martinez told the delegates that he himself had been a letter carrier and a member of Central California Coast Br. 52, the home branch of President Young, and said he was happy to be with the men and women who are “the backbone of the Postal Service.”



Secretary-Treasurer
Jane E. Broendel

Secretary-Treasurer Broendel then introduced a video welcome prepared by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada. On screen, Reid vowed to continue his full support in the fight for meaningful postal reform.

After Sister Broendel recognized former national officers on the stage, she invited Region 1 National Business Agent Dale Hart, whose region includes Nevada, to come forward. Hart introduced several of his fellow NBAs before giving way to Region 9 NBA Judy Willoughby, who represents Florida. She completed the NBA introductions.

Next, Broendel introduced the National Trustees and Resident National Officers. Then, by way of presenting President Young, Broendel noted that Las Vegas was sometimes called “Sin City,” and that many letter carriers would likely lose money on gambling during convention week. “However,” she said, “it was not a gamble when you chose Bill Young as your president.”

With that, the strains of “Viva Las Vegas” filled the hall as President Young came to the stage amid a raucous ovation.

Referring to the latest terrorism alerts, Young noted that letter carriers, both those on the street and in the hall, understand better than most people “how exposed we are these days to forces beyond our control.” Praising the delegates for overcoming the newest air travel complications, he said, “We cannot in any meaningful way deal with international terrorism...but we sure as hell can—we sure as hell must—tend to the business of representing letter carriers and protecting their rights.”

Before beginning his address, President Young expressed his personal thanks and admiration to South Florida Br. 1071 for the gracious way it handled the need to move the convention and he lauded Las Vegas Br. 2502 for stepping in on short notice and helping put together the event.

In opening his remarks, the union leader reminded his audience of the four objectives he detailed in his biennial report:

- ❖ A stronger employer and long-term job security through postal reform.
- ❖ A better job through collective bargaining.
- ❖ A strong union through training and political mobilization.
- ❖ A stronger country through union solidarity.

In updating delegates on postal reform, he emphasized that change is critical. “The status quo poses a very real threat to the job security of our members,” he said, because current law hobbles the Postal Service.

“Without a viable employer in the Internet Age, no labor contract by itself can protect our members’ jobs and no union can guarantee our standard of living.”

“Our aims are simple—to advance reform that will strengthen the USPS while protecting the pay, benefits and

collective bargaining rights of letter carriers,” he said, adding forcefully, “and to oppose and kill any bill that does not.”

The delegates broke into applause, one of roughly 20 interruptions in the course of the hour-long address.

On the subject of collective bargaining, Young said, “Enforcing the contract and finding ways to improve the day-to-day working conditions of letter carriers are just as important as negotiating a contract in the first place.” As examples, he pointed to the Route Protection Program developed when management pulled out of talks on route adjustments in 2005 and the recent “white paper” on combating chronic understaffing.

Still, he said, “Negotiating contracts is the single most important thing we do as a union.” In the talks beginning August 28, the NALC will seek “pay increases that reward letter carriers for their contributions to the success of the USPS,” and the union will “keep the pressure on postal management to resolve the workplace issues” between the parties.

Speaking of the effort launched just after the 2004 Honolulu Convention to find “a better, fairer way to inspect and adjust routes,” he said the process has been stymied by the Postal Service’s continuing embrace of the “deeply flawed” Delivery Operations Information System—DOIS. The national-level grievance over DOIS has forced USPS to the address the shortcomings of the system, and the once-comatose talks have resumed.

If, however, those negotiations prove fruitless, he vowed, “We will pursue relief in national arbitration—and we will pursue it hard.”

On political action, the president concentrated on two areas: the new Field Plan redefining the roles of the NBAs, the state legislative chairs, and the congressional liaisons; and the “Gimme 5 for COLCPE” campaign to dramatically boost the letter carrier PAC. He later detailed some of the special events planned for Thursday, designated as COLCPE Day.

Looking to the future, Young reiterated that postal reform is critical and said, “If we have to come back next year to try all over again, we will. But we will not accept a bad bill.” Again, applause greeted his vow.

As part of a forward-looking legislative agenda, he said the NALC will seek to expand Vote-by-Mail—and prepare to fight against Do-Not-Mail registries.

Beyond a fair contract, the union is aiming for “a breakthrough that incorporates Customer Connect, self-management and a thriving future based on the Postal Service’s mastery of ‘the last mile,’” he said. But he also delivered a stern warning to management: “Let me make this perfectly clear. No move by postal management could be more destructive...than to give in to the right-wing temptation to contract out our work.”

“Make no mistake,” he declared, “contracting out letter carrier work would surely backfire on the Postal Service and on the American public, and we must stop it dead in its tracks.”

“We already have one Wal-Mart in America. We don’t need a second one. We simply won’t stand for it.”

Young commented on the divisions in the labor movement and said the NALC would continue to work with the AFL-CIO



75-year member Sol Gold with plaque.

get-out-the-vote effort, and also work to bridge the differences between the two factions to rebuild the power of the movement.

“A powerful labor movement is central to a healthy democracy and to a strong country,” he said. The decline over the past 25 years in the standard of living for working families, paralleling a decline in union power, he said, “has shaken our confidence in the American dream. But the dream still lives and I am convinced that this country still has the heart and the courage to aspire to its highest ideals.”

“NALC shows that a union that delivers can keep the American dream alive,” President Young said. “All American workers deserve such a union and a piece of that dream.”

“Building a better workplace is a noble struggle,” he said. “Doing it with brothers and sisters, united in solidarity, is a joy. There is no group I would rather do it with than America’s letter carriers.”

A two-minute ovation followed the conclusion of his remarks.

After dispensing with the issue of credentialing of two delegates, President Young welcomed to the stage Brother Sol W. Gold, a 75-year member of Redondo Beach, CA now living in Las Vegas, for the presentation of a plaque. Brother Gold, soon to turn 96, was accompanied to the podium by his wife of 70 years, Toby, and a large contingent of children and grandchildren.

President Young next called for the report of the Rules Committee from Chair Art Muoio of Rochester, NY Br. 210. The rules, provided to delegates in advance, were adopted without dissent. Other committee members are:

Lee “Mike” Barry, Central California Coast Br. 52; Anibal Guadalupe, New York, NY Br. 36; Judy Mitchell, Huntsville, AL Br. 462; and John Walden Jr., Charlotte, NC Br. 545.

The president then introduced the Committee to Extend Greetings to the Auxiliary and assigned Committee Chair Matt Carroll of Camden, NJ Br. 540 to visit the NALC Auxiliary, meeting in convention in the nearby Las Vegas Hilton hotel. The committee also includes:

Bob Demmers, Grand Forks, ND Br. 517; Christopher Lanetti, Philadelphia, PA Br. 157; David Miller, Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458; and Thomas Rollins, Nashville, TN Br. 4.

President Young next called for a preliminary report from Carol Maggio, a member of San Francisco Br. 214 and the chair of the Credentials Committee. She said that through Sunday, 7,557 delegates had registered, including 7,475 branch delegates, 54 delegates-at-large, and 28 national officers. She also reported delegates came from 559 branches, representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Maggio said the committee would provide a final report on Wednesday. Other members of the committee are:

David Barbuzzi, NE Massachusetts Mgd. Br. 25; Marie Didier, Elmhurst, IL Br. 825; Tom Gates, Eugene, OR Br. 916; Donald Herold Jr., Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100; Jerry “Tony” Hutson, Galesburg, IL Br. 88; David Kennedy, Cincinnati, OH Br. 43; Rick Kleeba, Milwaukee, WI Br. 2; Jill Lemons, Canoga Park, CA Br. 4006; Steve Mahoney, Boston, MA Br. 34; Rhonda Massari, SE Pennsylvania Mgd. Br. 725; Laurie Miale, Miami, FL Br. 1071; Erik Nylund, Missoula, MT Br. 701; Nicole Rhine, Lincoln, NE Br. 8; Ray Tillman, Boulder, CO Br. 642; Paul Toms, Indianapolis, IN Br. 39; Bill Trudell, Springfield, NJ Br. 38; Jim Walzenbach, San Diego, CA Br. 70; Michael Williams, Denver, CO Br. 47; and Lynn Worrell, Iowa City, IA Br. 483.

President Young then asked members of the Nevada State Association to escort to the stage Rep. Shelly Berkley, who represents Nevada’s First District, including much of Las Vegas. After first remarking that “I’ve been in Congress for



Members of the Nevada State Association welcome Rep. Shelly Berkley (D-NV) and escort her to the stage.

eight years and I have never seen a crowd this big,” she launched into a vigorous 15-minute address that touched on many areas, including the fact that Las Vegas is “the fastest growing city, and the fastest growing union city” in America. She urged delegates to “send a message to Washington, DC this November 7 that we are tired of business as usual,” and concluded with the admonition, “Politics is not a spectator sport.”

Following a few announcements, President Young welcomed to the podium Billy Hayes, General Secretary of the Communications Workers Union of Great Britain. Brother Hayes gave the delegates an overview of deregulation of the post office in Britain, including the abolition in January 2006 of the 350-year-old letter mail monopoly.



General Secretary of the CWU Billy Hayes

“The monopoly was given up in the name of competition,” he said, “or so-called competition, (because) all the competitors are doing is entering mail into our network” and letting the Royal Mail do the real work of transporting mail and carrying it “the last mile.”

Hayes, who became a letter carrier in 1974, recalled the attempts by the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher to privatize the mail and the subsequent “neo-liberal” efforts to deregulate that are being contested today.

The problem with the mail system is not a lack of competition, Hayes declared. “The biggest problem is under-investment—not under-investment in physical plant, but in human resources, as they like to call us now.”

“If you want a successful postal service, you need to invest in the workforce,” he said, winning applause.

Secretary-Treasurer’s report

Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel asked delegates to take some time to look over her detailed report in the *NALC Officers’ Reports 2004-2006 book* and to review the separate financial reports booklet.

Broendel said the downward trend in carrier craft employment that began in 2001 continued, but the membership percentage remained at a high 93 percent. She thanked the employees of the two Headquarters departments that report directly to her—Membership and Finance—for their “behind-

the-scenes work” to keep NALC running smoothly. She also praised the Information Technology department for the critical assistance it provides. “The combined effort of all three departments makes my job a lot easier,” she said.

President Young then called on Election Commissioner Joe DeRossi of Brooklyn Br. 41 and the members of the Board of Tellers, appointed under Rule 12, to come forward. The tellers:

Douglas Adams, New Jersey Merged Br. 38; Brooks Bennett, Seattle, WA Br. 79; Tracy Bert, Kent, WA Br. 2038; Homer Christian, Huntington, WV Br. 359; Pam Donato, Minneapolis, MN Br. 9; Robbie Gardiner, Fort Wayne, IN Br. 116; Thomas Gavin Sr., Knoxville, TN Br. 419; Kent Hankin, Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3; Tommy Hairston, Jackson, MS Br. 217; Harold Hilliard, New York, NY Br. 36; Ron Kania, Milwaukee, WI Br. 2; James Karnop, Minneapolis, MN Br. 9; Emily Lane, Greer, SC Br. 2553.

Also, John Magliaro, Worcester, MA Br. 12; Steve Matthews, Northern Virginia Br. 3520; Paul McGowan, Jacksonville, FL Br. 53; Ricky Mendiola, San Antonio, TX Br. 421; Ron O’Brien, Oak Park, IL Br. 608; Ralf Rivas, Las Cruces, NM Br. 2905; Vincent Robinson, Glen Burnie, MD Br. 4422; Steve Sharp, Louisville, KY Br. 14; Antonia Shields, Birmingham, AL Br. 530; Jerald Stafslie, Minot, ND Br. 1152; Tim Wacker, Sparks, NV Br. 2778; Frank Ware, Santa Clara, CA Br. 1427; Andrew Weiner, Jamaica, NY Br. 562; Paula Weltsch, Phoenix, AZ Br. 576; and Butch Wuwert, Toledo, OH Br. 100.

Band Committee Chair Jim Servideo of Worcester, MA Br. 12 member presented his committee’s report, telling delegates that the total cost to have three bands perform at the convention is \$116,163.20.

The convention then turned to General Resolutions. Vice President Gary Mullins told the assembly about the process the Executive Council follows in determining whether to approve resolutions in advance of the convention, including considering whether a resolution makes the union stronger and the impact on letter carriers nationwide.

Soon after Executive Vice President Jim Williams began presenting the resolutions, a motion was passed to adopt *en bloc* the ones approved by the Executive Council. They included Resolution 7, to work with USPS to expand the number of payroll allotments beyond the current limit of two, and Resolution 8, to provide 55-year and 65-year membership pins.

Lively debates took place over resolutions calling for monthly reports in *The Postal Record* of COLCPE disbursements and for the endorsement of a Thrift Savings Plan “Green Fund,” but in both cases the convention disapproved the proposals.

**Vice President
Gary Mullins**



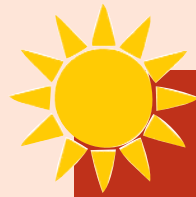
A teller vote was held on a resolution urging an official NALC policy to disregard USPS employee surveys. The resolution was rejected, 2,866 to 2,000. President Young commented after the vote that he believes it is best for local branches to decide whether to participate or not.

One resolution was tabled for consideration on Tuesday.

Following some announcements, the convention adjourned at 2:44 p.m. until 10 a.m. Tuesday.



**Executive Vice President
Jim Williams**



NALC AUXILIARY

Monday, August 14

Music and a sing-along led by the Washington State Letter Carriers band greeted delegates at the start of the Monday session of the 50th Convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers Auxiliary.

The theme of this year’s Convention, held at the Las Vegas Hilton, is “Treasured Memories—Golden Opportunities.”

Nancy Southern, the wife of NALC Director of Retired Members Don Southern and a member of Auxiliary 231 in Miami, where the convention was originally planned, introduced the Auxiliary’s national officers: Bonnie Christy and Kathy Miller, Laws; Treasurer Susan McNeese; Assistant Secretary Linda Kirby; Secretary Gloria Alexander; Vice President Joan Spero; and President Lynne Jester.

Before the band members left the stage they played “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which was followed by a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Auxiliary Chaplain Peggy Winston offered an inspirational message and prayer, Patsy Mester followed with the Collect, and Linda Kirby read the thought for the day. President Jester then introduced Dollie McPartlin, parliamentarian for the Convention.

Letter carrier Jerry Fitzsimmons of NALC Portland, OR Br. 82, presented a video on the history of the NALC Auxiliary, which he prepared for the 100th anniversary of Portland Auxiliary Branch 1.

To start the business of the day, committee assignments were announced and their members were introduced. First-time delegates—35, the largest number ever—were introduced and given a small gift.

The Credentials Committee reported 207 registered delegates representing 27 states.

The Rules Committee read the rules of the Convention, which were accepted by the body.

Amendments to the Auxiliary Bylaws were presented by the Laws Committee. Amendment Number 1, regarding membership, received the most discussion and was finally accepted by a vote of 65 to 47. Amendments involving a grievance committee and officers and elections were defeated. One further amendment pertaining to officers and elections was approved. An amendment to do away with proxy votes was defeated. Two amendments were sent back to the laws committee for revision.

Rep. Shelly Berkley from Nevada’s First District addressed the group. The Democratic congresswoman received a standing ovation at the conclusion of her message.

Director Tim O’Malley of the NALC Health Benefit Plan also spoke to the convention, predicting exciting news about the plan coming within the year.

The Greetings Committee from the NALC’s 65th Biennial Convention was introduced and presented greetings for a successful convention.

The day’s business ended on a happy note with the distribution of door prizes.

—Ann Borowski, Milwaukee Auxiliary Branch 144