NALC CONVENTION
CHRONICLE
COVERING THE SECOND SESSION: TUESDAY, AUG. 16, 2016

VARIOUS VOICES, NEW PERSPECTIVES

From politics to postal banking, delegates to NALC's 70th biennial convention in Los Angeles heard from individuals on both sides of the political divide—and even from both sides of the Pacific Ocean—as a line-up of speakers injected fresh takes into a number of thought-provoking and often exciting ideas.

There were awards for excellence in the more traditional means of getting NALC's message out to letter carriers, right alongside the introduction of cutting-edge technology for reaching out directly to members' smartphones.

Letter carriers even heard a speech delivered in Japanese while they simultaneously read its translation as it scrolled on the hall's monitors.

And of course there were the usual civil, healthy and democratic debates over the future of the union as delegates discussed proposed amendments to NALC's constitution.

BUSINESS RESUMES

At 10 a.m. sharp, NALC President Fredric Rolando called to order the second day of the union's 70th biennial convention.

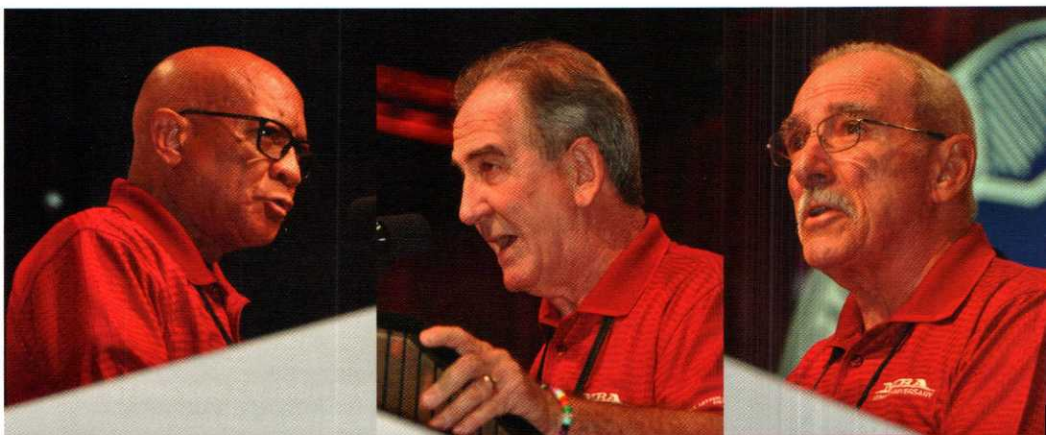
The president first called to the stage San Diego Branch 70 letter carrier George Elias to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Los Angeles Branch 24 retiree Ray Espana led delegates in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Delivering the day's invocation was Monsignor John Morretta from Resurrection Catholic Church of Los Angeles. Morretta told delegates that while he was in training to be a priest in the 1960s, he worked for a short time as a letter carrier.

Rolando next asked Board of Tellers Chairman and Election Commissioner Joe DeRossi of Brooklyn, NY Branch 41 to come to the microphone and explain the rules regarding the election of delegates to the AFL-CIO convention. DeRossi said that nominations would take place on Wednesday, with the election on Thursday.

Next, Rolando released NALC Executive Vice President Timothy C. O'Malley and the members of the Committee to Extend Greetings to the NALC Auxiliary: Scott Van Derven of Milwaukee, WI Branch 2 (chairman); Elisabeth Goodwin of Houston Branch 283; and Frank Morris of Gulf Coast Mississippi Branch 1374.

Delegates took to the microphones to debate amendments to the *NALC Constitution*.



The Board of Trustees presented the amendments to the convention. From l: Larry Brown (chairman), Mike Gill and Randall Keller.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine was on stage next to kick off consideration of constitutional amendments. Leading the discussion of the seven amendments before the convention were the members of the NALC Board of Trustees: Larry Brown (chairman), Mike Gill and Randall Keller.

Mehrsa Baradaran, author of *How the Other Half Banks*

Convention delegates ultimately approved all of the Executive Council's recommendations for proposed constitutional amendments. For example:

> An amendment to Article 3, Section 1, now grants the council greater flexibility for deciding future locations for national conventions.

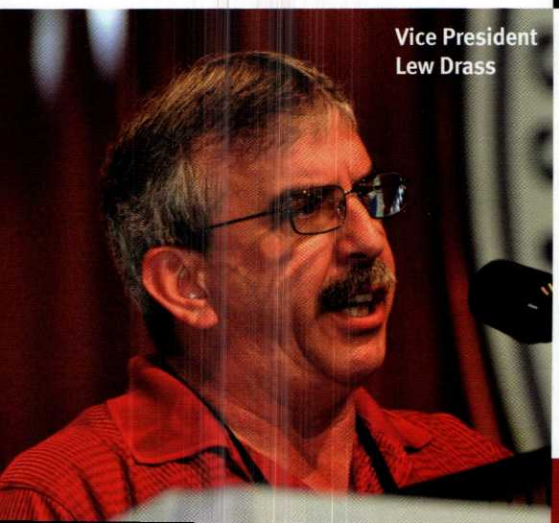
> An amendment to Article 6, Section 2, will allow for a possible future realignment of the boundaries of NALC's 15 regions. An amendment to this amendment, calling for convention approval of any such realignment, passed on a teller vote, 2,516 to 2,032. No realignment announcement will happen earlier than 2020.

> A lively debate took place around a proposed addition to Article 7, Section 2(a)(1) calling for changing the procedure for collecting dues from certain members who are in a no-deduction status, such as those on military or workers' compensation leave, or full-time union officers. While delegates ultimately upheld the Executive Council's recommendation of disapproval for this amendment, union leaders said they are aware that the current dues-collection procedure can be a burden for some branches and they are looking into ways to alleviate that burden.

> And portions of Article 7, Section 3 were amended to eliminate the Letter Carriers Band Fund, to take the 20 cents per member per year that had been allocated from members' dues for that fund and to add it to the 75 cents per member per year dues allocated for the National Convention Fund.

Shortly after noon, President Rolando called to the stage Mehrsa Baradaran, an associate professor at the University of Georgia's law school and the author of *How the Other Half Banks.*

Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine



Vice President Lew Drass

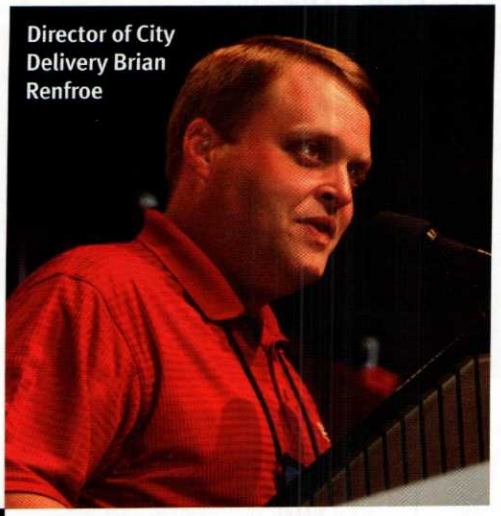
Baradaran has extensively researched the idea of allowing the U.S. Postal Service to offer banking services such as savings accounts, as it did under the Postal Savings System from 1910 to 1967. She asked delegates to consider whether the solution to the problem of unbanked communities was an old one.

"If we return to a system of postal banking," she said, "we would eliminate banking deserts in this country, leaving no American unbanked."

Delegates gave Baradaran a letter carrier cheer.

NALC Vice President Lew Drass, chairman of the Committee on Appeals, took the stage next to go over the convention appeals process. Drass said there are four appeals to the national convention that are scheduled to be addressed on Friday, and he asked that appellants or their representatives present at the convention who wish to address delegates in support of the appeals get in touch with him prior to Friday's session.

Next, the delegates approved, by voice vote, a motion to pass the hat for donations for a retired Chicago Branch 11 member whose son was killed.



Director of City Delivery Brian Renfroe

ORGANIZING

President Rolando then called to the microphone Secretary-Treasurer Rhine, who presented her report to the convention. "Overall, the membership of the NALC has grown since the 2014 convention in Philadelphia," she said, noting that the organizing percentage for CCAs has reached 86.2 percent, up from 77.2 percent in 2014.

"Obviously, organizing CCAs is extremely important," she said, "as they are the future of the letter carrier workforce and of the NALC."

Rolando then gave awards to the branches with the largest organization rates. The best organized small branch, with fewer than 500 members, is Branch 120 of Paterson, NJ. The branch is 100 percent organized.

The best organized branch with between 500 and 999 active city carriers is Branch 15 of Providence, RI, with a

98.9 percent organization rate.

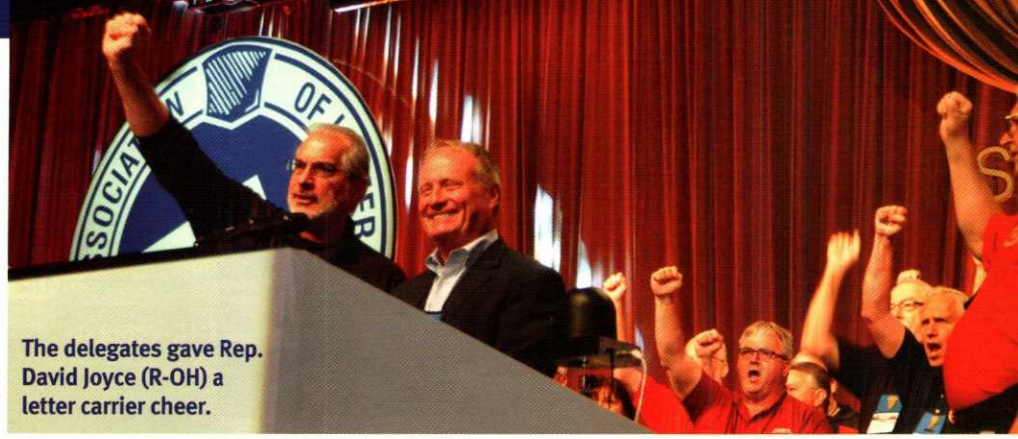
The best organized branch with 1,000 or more active carriers is South Florida Branch 1071 with 98.1 percent of active carriers who are members of the union.

Next, the president introduced Rep. David Joyce (R-OH), who addressed the convention. Joyce told the delegates that letter carriers in Ohio had quickly reached out to him after he took office in 2013 and explained the truth about the Postal Service's financial state as well as the importance of supporting its mission.

"I can tell you, I've had your back ever since," Joyce said.

He said there is momentum behind legislation designed to restore the USPS to health and strengthen its service, and he urged NALC members to continue to get their message to members of Congress in both political parties.

The delegates thanked Joyce with a letter carrier cheer.



The delegates gave Rep. David Joyce (R-OH) a letter carrier cheer.

COMMUNICATION

To introduce NALC's new mobile app for smartphones, the NALC Member App, President Rolando called Director of City Delivery Brian Renfroe to the microphone. Renfroe reviewed some of the capabilities of the app, including a personalized non-scheduled-day calendar, comprehensive political and legislative tools, and push notifications tailored to the individual interests of the user. The app is now available for free download from the iTunes Store and from Google Play.

After that, President Rolando turned to presenting awards for branch publications:

Best Website: Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100—third place; Massachusetts Northeast Merged Br. 25—second place; Eugene, OR Br. 916—first place.

Best Cartoon or Photo: Christine Delgado, South Florida Br. 1071—third place; Jack Hayes, Seattle Br. 79—second place; Ken Bonin, Massachusetts Northeast Merged Br. 25—first place.

Best News or Feature Story: Richard Thayer, North Carolina State Association—third and second place; Jess Stoner, Santa Barbara, CA Br. 290—first place.

Promoting Unionism: Mark Travers, South Florida Br. 1071—third place; Dave Welsh, San Francisco Br. 214 and Peggy Durso, South Florida Br. 1071—second place (tie); Javier Rodriguez, South Florida Br. 1071—first place.

Best Editorial or Column: Susan Lewis, Buffalo-Western New York Br. 3—third place; Javier Rodriguez—second place; Richard Thayer—first place.

General Excellence among Small Branch Publications: Toms River, NJ Br. 2128—third place; Santa Barbara, CA Br. 290—second place; Eugene, OR Br. 916—first place.

General Excellence among Large Branch or State Association Publications: New Hampshire State Association—third place; South Florida Br. 1071—second place; Boston Br. 34—first place.

Delegates from California escorted Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) to the stage.

The delegates then viewed a video, "Delivering Courage," that highlights the valor and caring often displayed by letter carriers when they encounter emergencies or patrons in need of help, as well as the warm relationships carriers often have with customers.

Japan Post Group Union President Toshimichi Omata

President Rolando next welcomed Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), who represents the Los Angeles area, to the microphone. With a crucial election approaching this fall, Chu reminded letter carriers of their role in our electoral system.

"You ensure that those absentee ballots get to the polling places on time," she said. "Our very system of democracy depends on our Postal Service—and you."

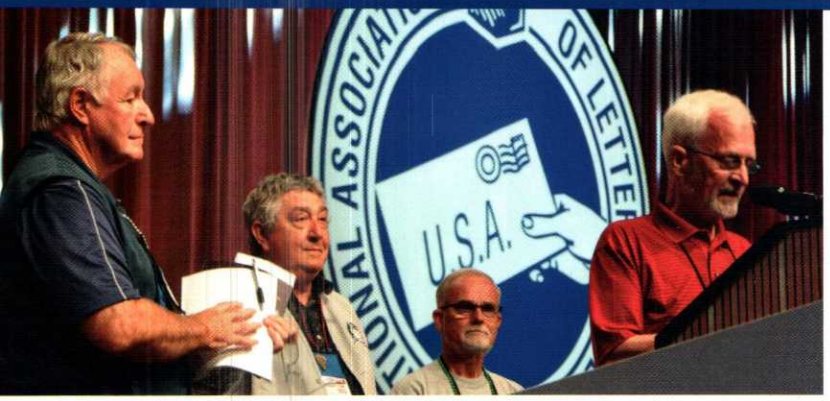
Chu promised to continue her partnership with NALC in the effort to pass legislation to strengthen the Postal Service this fall. "When Congress comes back from recess in September," she said, "we will need your continued advocacy.

"You can count on me to be your steadfast ally," she added.

The delegates thanked Chu with a letter carrier cheer.

A STRUGGLE WITH PRIVATIZATION

President Rolando welcomed Toshimichi Omata, president of the Japan Post Group Union, to the lec-



Director of Retired Members Ron Watson (r) introduced the Retirement Committee.

tern. Omata addressed the delegates in Japanese while a translation was projected on video screens.

Omata described his union's efforts to adapt to the partial privatization of his country's postal delivery, banking and insurance services, and he called for greater cooperation by labor unions across national borders to confront the forces of privatization and globalization.

"Let's make a new step in the history of the international labor movement, and unite to help workers," he said. "I look forward to a deeper friendship with NALC."

Next, President Rolando brought the Mileage and Per Diem Committee to the stage: Committee Chairman Antonia Shields of Birmingham, AL Br. 530; Kenneth Montgomery of Rochester, NY Br. 210; and Lyn Liberty of Phoenix, AZ Br. 576. Shields announced that the committee has set a per diem rate of $214. The recommendations of the committee were adopted by voice vote.

The president then brought members of the Nalcrest Committee to the stage: Committee Chairman Matty Rose of South Florida Br. 1071; Tom Young of Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100; and Don Southern of Lakeland, FL Br. 1779. Rose said Nalcrest is financially stable thanks to full occupancy, and now has a wait list of more than 60.

NALC AUXILIARY

NALC Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley then told the delegates about a plan to broaden the NALC Auxiliary as a grassroots activist organization to include children, friends and community allies of letter carriers, along with spouses. O'Malley introduced Auxiliary President Cynthensis Lang, who in turn introduced the Auxiliary's national officers: Vice President Cynthia Martinez, Secretary George Anna Myers, Assistant Secretary Linda Davis and Treasurer Pam Fore.

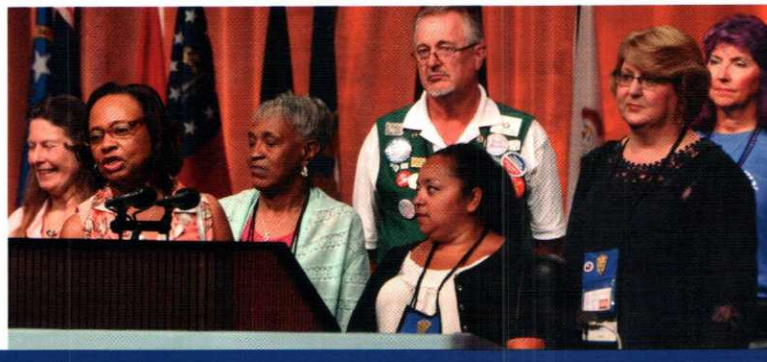
Lang urged NALC members to help expand the Auxiliary. "We are going in a new direction and we need your help to increase our membership," she said.

President Rolando then called on Director of Retired Members Ron Watson, who introduced the Retirement Committee: Chairman Ernie Kirkland of Lexington, KY Br. 361; Doug Gulley of Columbus, OH Br. 78; and John Walsh of Albany, NY Br. 29. Before Kirkland delivered the committee's report, Rolando recognized retiree Tom Deaton of Anderson, IN Br. 489, who turned 100 last Saturday and will reach 80 years of membership this year.

Kirkland delivered the committee's report and called for a moment of silence for all members who have died since the last convention.

During the Tuesday session, general resolutions 9, 12 and 15 were withdrawn by their makers.

After a few housekeeping announcements, the session adjourned shortly after 3 p.m.



NALC Auxiliary President Cythensis Lang spoke about the future of her organization.

NALC AUXILIARY

TUESDAY, AUG. 16

Delegates were greeted with music from the Salt Lake City Letter Carriers Band.

President Lang reconvened the meeting and introduced NALC Executive Vice President Timothy O'Malley, who came to the microphone and introduced the NALC Committee to Extend Greetings to the Auxiliary: Scott Van Derven of Milwaukee Br. 2; Elisabeth Goodwin of Houston Branch 283; and Frank Morris of Gulf Coast Mississippi Branch 1374. They gave the delegates and guests a warm welcome filled with hopes for a wonderful convention.

The morning was filled with guest speakers from the NALC. First was Geneva Kubal of St. Paul, MN Br. 28, NALC headquarters staff member and MDA coordinator, who spoke on all the hard work the Auxiliary has done over the years for MDA. She also shared that we can send in pictures of different events to be shared on their Facebook page by e-mailing them to mda@nalc.org.

NALC Special Assistant to the President Pam Donato of Minneapolis Br. 9 addressed the members about the vision for the Auxiliary. She spoke on how the Auxiliary has always been there for the NALC, standing side-by-side with the NALC for anything it has needed. She also stated that in the new vision, she hopes to see the Auxiliary become involved with such programs as Carrier Alert, the NALC Veterans Group, social services and service to the aging, to name a few.

We also had NALC Health Benefits Director Brian Hellman and his assistant, Beth Morris, speak about the Health Benefit Plan. Hellman thanked the Auxiliary for all that we do.

The last visitor of the day was NALC Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren, who wanted the Auxiliary to know how important we had been to the continued success of the NALC. President Lang thanked all for coming to speak with us.

The bylaws committee completed its reports. All bylaws were passed.

The meeting was recessed at 1:06 p.m.

—Submitted by George Anna Myers, NALCA Secretary