

Letter from the Editor

Wow. An engaged NALC has made a remarkable difference in the nation's public discourse—and political decisions—over the past year. Whether warding off ill-conceived congressional action or promoting worker-friendly candidates, letter carriers have been both active and effective.

Our union has had a strategy that makes sense, tactics that advance the cause and a message that resonates.

The credit for these efforts, and these results, goes to rank-and-file letter carriers across the country, to our national business agents and union officers from the local to national level, to President Rolando, and to our legislative department and others at Headquarters.

You've helped prevent the flawed Senate bill from becoming law and the more egregious House measure from being voted on, while averting a takeover of Washington by anti-worker politicians who'd sooner dismantle the U.S. Postal Service than undo the damage done by their pre-funding mandate.

So where does this leave us? Not with a grand victory, but with an opportunity to persuade the administration and the Congress to take a fresh look at what ails the USPS from a financial standpoint and at how those problems can best be addressed. Just as fixing pre-funding won't instantly solve the broader problems of the USPS but rather will provide a chance to focus on them in a thoughtful manner, having avoided the worst political and legislative outcomes now offers us an opening to accomplish something positive.

No easy task, this second phase. It's one thing to block; it's quite another to build. As we undertake an effort to shape the future of the USPS and of our craft, this department stands ready to assist the efforts of our members, our local and regional leaders, our president and our staffers as they seek to inform and persuade.

We need to redouble our efforts to help as many Americans as possible—at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, on both ends of Capitol Hill, and on main streets from Juneau (AK) to Juno Beach (FL)—grasp the value of the Postal Service, the folly of degrading the universal network, and the imperative of developing a business plan that addresses the challenges and recognizes the opportunities.

Because we have logic and facts on our side, communications is central. When decision-makers—that includes the public that hires the politicians—discard their preconceived notions, we can make inroads among people of diverse political orientations and parties.

And that, shifting from external to internal communications, brings us to an important point. To succeed in this second phase, we must remain unified. I've received several calls from members concerned about *Postal Record* columns touting the union's endorsement of President Obama, or this or that Branch Item appearing to suggest that loyal NALC members had to support certain candidates.

Let me try to allay such concerns.

For starters, the presidential endorsement stemmed from the balloting by delegates at the national convention in July. Moreover, as President Rolando has carefully pointed out in his columns, members decide their votes based on various factors; for those who weigh work matters heavily, the endorsed candidates have positions on issues relevant to letter carriers that are closer to our views.

As I've told those who've called, sometimes in lengthy conversations—these are important matters and every member of this union deserves a respectful airing of his or her views—the NALC's political and legislative activities do not reflect partisan considerations. They are based, rather, on our common interest in promoting the well-being of letter carriers and of the Postal Service, as well as related issues such as the strengthening of public service and protection of the right of collective bargaining.

The political diversity that inevitably exists in a union like ours—one that reflects the society we serve—is not a weakness but rather an invaluable source of strength. And we need to tap that strength now more than ever. As we endeavor to save the Postal Service and protect the interests of letter carriers—and as we therefore cast our communications net broadly, aiming for support across the political spectrum from everyone who understands our issues and our worth—the participation of *all* our members will be vital.



PHILIP DINE

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Managing Editor Philip Dine
Designer/Web Editor Mike Shea
Internet Communications Coordinator
Joe Conway
Writer/Editor Rick Hodges
Editorial Assistant Jenessa Kildall

The Postal Record (ISSN 0032-5376) is published monthly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Subscription included in membership dues. First-class subscription available for \$20 per year (contact Membership Department).

© 2012 by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Circulation: 287,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

CHANGE of ADDRESS? Contact the Membership Department.

Follow us on the NALC Activist Alert Blog and on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by going to NALC.org.

