



REGION 5 NBA REPORT

David A. Teegarden



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National Business Agent's Report

NALC Region 5

As I write this article, we are only a few days into the month of June, but it has already proven to be extremely busy. We conducted our first ever, to my knowledge, Stewards college training, conducted an intervention of sorts in Topeka, KS, attended a retirement dinner and Quilt of Valor ceremony, participated in an MDA golf event and are currently headed to an arbitration in Kansas City, Kansas. Those of you who know me understand that I absolutely love training and arbitration, but it feels like sometimes there aren't enough days in the week to fit it all in.

Region 5 Letter Carrier Heroes

This month's member spotlight is on Lincoln Branch 8 member Ryan Essink. I recently attended a retirement dinner in Lincoln and as part of that dinner Ryan was presented with a Quilt of Valor for his military service. Ryan was a Marine and received several medals for his service overseas in combat actions. The Quilt of Valor ceremony honors United States military women and men who distinguish themselves in their military service. The ceremony presenter gave a history Ryan's military service, medals, awards, and campaigns that he had been involved in and presented him with a quilt made locally. The mission behind this initiative is to bestow a universal symbol and token of thanks, solace, and remembrance to those who serve in harm's way to protect and defend our lives and freedoms. Congratulations Ryan and thank you for your service!

DRT Issue Update

My last report outlined the backlog at the DRT and in the Region 5 office for grievances and cases pending arbitration. Since that time, we have engaged in numerous pre-arbitration sessions both at the HQ level and at the District level. We have resolved a number of grievances where we came to an acceptable mutual agreement. To reduce the backlog, we have also sent cases to DRT's outside Region 5 whose caseload could accommodate that. We are beginning to make limited headway. Contractually both sides are mandated to reduce the backlog using these means as well as activating back-up teams, which we have done. We will continue in our efforts to discuss with the local parties the reasons creating the backlog and how they can reduce it. We still have a great number of cases that we cannot agree to resolve due to repeated violations of cease-and-desist language, Step B, pre-arb, and arbitration decisions. As I have stated many times, we want compliance and will not go backwards on settlements as it will only exacerbate the issue.

Region 5 Training

We finished the first Steward College training for Region 5 and the participants overwhelmingly liked what they learned. 29 individuals from across Region 5 embarked on what would be an extremely fast-paced and challenging 3 days of training. The consensus, we need to add one more day. The instructors also learned from that first experience and will make the changes necessary to make this an even better event for our members. I would like to express my appreciation to Region 2 for all the input and to the facilitators, Charles Sexton, Pat Baker, and Anthony Mitchell as well as the branches for sending their stewards to us for training. Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not thank Branch 343 for hosting the event and their three full-time officers, John McLaughlin, Marvin Booker and Brian Litteken for all of your assistance.

Branch Presidents should be on the lookout for the next virtual steward training conducted by Margaret Parker later this month and in early July. Registration will once again be done via the “members only” section of the NALC website.

Intervention

Charles Sexton and I recently conducted an intervention of sorts in Topeka, Kansas. There are several issues that have been brewing there for awhile now. The Dispute Resolution Process is broken, the station climate and carrier morale are at an all time low and retention rates for new hires have plummeted. We were accompanied by all the stewards and most of the officers of the Topeka, Kansas branch. What we made perfectly clear was that the status quo is not and will not be acceptable. Carriers will be treated with dignity and the respect that they deserve, and I will use any and all legal and/or contractual means at my disposal to make that happen. After the meeting the carriers agreed it was a good start but as with everything, the proofs in the pudding. We have every intention of holding management accountable for what they agreed to. This will not be the last installation where we conduct these types of meetings. If you have issues like these in your installation or station, please contact us so that we can assist you in developing a plan of action.

Stationary Events

This issue has become a daily occurrence with supervisors walking up to carriers and inquiring about stationary events on their routes. Sometimes this is days after the event occurred. In my opinion this should be approached in two ways. First tell the management official that you are invoking your Weingarten Rights and would like a steward present if this could lead to discipline. If you are told your answers cannot be used to discipline you, then answer honestly and to the best of your ability. I would assume that I was working, moving mail, mark-ups, at a CBU etc.

If management tells you the answers can be used against you, say nothing more until your steward is provided and you have a pre-conference meeting with the steward.

Second, we should not be discussing any type of productivity on the workroom floor whether or not they are disciplining the carrier or having a job discussion. Those issues should be handled in the office. It is inappropriate to conduct this type of investigative interview on the workroom floor because in my opinion it violates M-39 115.4, Article 17, several Step 4 agreements, and potentially the JSOV. We should be grieving this where appropriate, after carriers have asked for union representation, and where management insists on having these conversations on the workroom floor. You might also need to update estimates for your workday after having said conversations depending on how long they take.

David A. Teegarden
National Business Agent