

# TRAINING FOR ARBITRATION ADVOCATES

On February 6 and 7, the NPMHU's Contract Administration Department (CAD) conducted an intensive, two-day training in the National Office in Washington, DC for approximately 20 experienced Mail Handler advocates from around the country. The aim of the training was to ensure that the NPMHU and all of its Local Unions would have fully trained advocates ready to present ongoing cases that are being heard, or about to be heard, in Regional-level arbitration.

The training was organized and conducted by a handful of experienced NPMHU advocates, who shared their advice during the training, and also produced several volumes of materials that are now available to these advocates. Leading the panel was the Manager of the CAD, T.J. Branch. He was joined by David Ross, Director of the NPMHU's Western Region Office; Bob Broxton, former President of Local 301 and current NPMHU representative in many jurisdictional disputes arising under Regional Instruction 399; and Bruce Lerner, NPMHU General Counsel. The officers and advocates who were able to attend the training session included, in order of Local Union, Chris Bentley of Local 297, Bobby Blum and Tom Ruther of Local 300, Jeff Anderson of Local 301, Kevin Fletcher and Charles Manago of Local 305, Larry Long of Local 306, Rita Tripp of Local 307, John Gibson of Local 308, Dave Wilkin of Local 309, Eileen Mills and Harry Kimbrough of Local 311, Ira Edelstein of Local 318, Robert Fournier of Local 320, and Don Gonzales and Cindy Hoehl-Rinker of Local 321.

The training focused on specific procedural and substantive issues that are likely to arise in the coming months and years, with the aim of ensuring that NPMHU advocates in all parts of the country would have specially-trained individuals to call upon when dealing with complex arbitration cases. In addition to covering specific substantive issues, the training also provided participants with valuable general advice, including the importance of mastering the facts and the arguments prior to presenting a case; the need to find one's own style in presenting a case; the types of cases that demand written opening statements and post-hearing briefs; the importance of researching and understanding the arbitrator who will be hearing the case, both by reading relevant decisions previously issued by that arbitrator and by talking to other NPMHU advocates who have participated in hearings with that arbitrator to find out how the arbitrator runs a hearing; and the value added by researching and understanding the representatives advocating for the other side and the procedures used in each Region. The participants also were cautioned about making promises or creating false expectations in their dealings with grievants and Local Unions.

The trainers then provided information and guidance on virtually all aspects of an arbitration hearing, to help participants be as prepared as possible in representing our members and enforcing our contract. The most important message of the training: there is no substitute for preparation, so be prepared.



*(l to r) Local 311 Recording Secretary Harry Kimbrough, Eastern Region Vice President & Local 305 President Kevin Fletcher, Northeastern Regional Director Tom Ruther, Local 308 President John Gibson, Local 309 President Dave Wilkin, Local 301 Arbitration Advocate Bob Broxton, Local 307 Grand Rapids Branch President Rita Tripp, Local 321 President Don Gonzales, Local 301 SEBM (ME) Jeffrey Anderson, Eastern Regional Director Eileen Mills, Local 306 Chief Steward and Arbitration Advocate Larry Long, Local 320 Steward Robert Fournier, Local 297 Vice President Chris Bentley, Local 321 Vice President Cindy Hoehl-Rinker, National President John Hegarty, Local 300 Vice President Robert Blum, Central & Western Regional Director & CAD Field Office Manager David Ross, Local 318 Vice President Ira Edelstein, and CAD manager T.J. Branch*

Central & Western  
Regional Director  
& CAD Field Office  
Manager David Ross

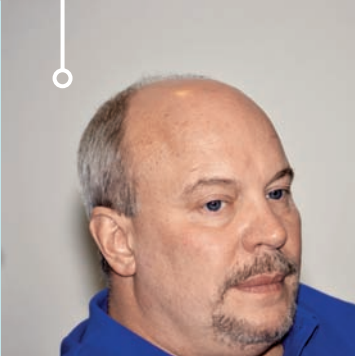


Local 300  
Vice President  
Robert Blum



Local 306 Chief  
Steward and  
Arbitration Advocate  
Larry Long

Eastern Region  
Vice President and  
Local 305 President  
Kevin Fletcher



Local 321 Vice  
President Cindy  
Hoehl-Rinker



Southern  
Regional Director  
Charles Manago

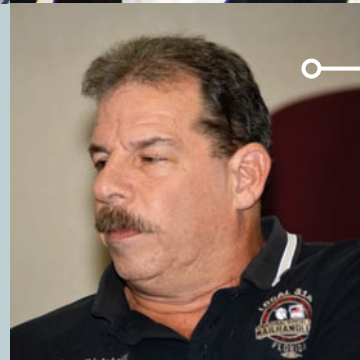


Local 311 Recording  
Secretary Harry  
Kimbrough



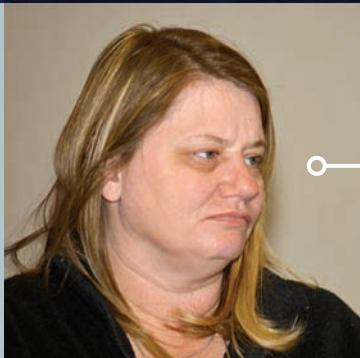
Northeastern  
Regional Director  
Tom Ruther

CAD manager  
T.J. Branch

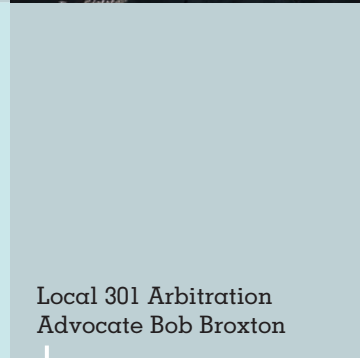


Local 318 Vice President  
Ira Edelstein

Local 297 Vice President  
Chris Bentley



Eastern Regional  
Director  
Eileen Mills



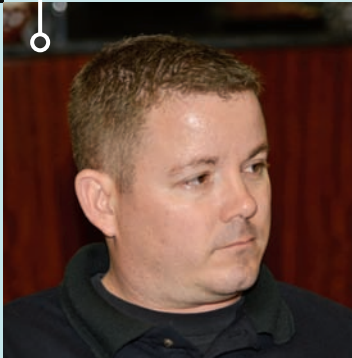
Local 301 Arbitration  
Advocate Bob Broxton



Local 307 Grand  
Rapids Branch  
President Rita Tripp



Local 308 President  
John Gibson



Local 321 President  
Don Gonzales



Local 301 SEBM (ME)  
Jeffrey Anderson

