

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

### E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN  
DELANO  
MOJAVE

TEHACHAPI

AVENAL  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST

TRONA

BAKERSFIELD  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER

WASCO

BORON  
McFARLAND  
TAFT



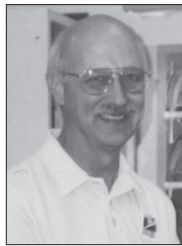
CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901

VOLUME LXXX NUMBER 7

AUGUST 2008

at the

**Mike:**



**Each month, one of my hardest tasks is trying to decide what to write about. It always seems that whatever I write will be redundant.**

**This month, I want you to consider this short message.**

Because of the wisdom, determination and courage of those who founded the NALC, we are members of an Association which exists to protect and preserve hard-won rights and benefits. Whether or not you have chosen in the past to be active in your Union, local activists, state representatives and national officers are relentlessly active. They ensure that Contractual safeguards are defended and that legislative actions will not erode many things which may be taken for granted.

Seven members of Branch 782 attended the recent National Convention of the *National* Association of Letter Carriers in Boston. Elected as your delegates, they joined with over seven thousand other Letter Carriers to participate in determining the direction of the NALC.

*This month's general meeting is an opportunity for each of you to personally have your voices heard about things which are affecting you each day on the workroom floor on this larger stage, too.*

Our NALC National Business Agent, "Manny" Peralta, is scheduled to attend our meeting on August 26, 2008. Without a doubt, he will share issues which are of concern. More importantly, he will listen to you tell him about things which concern *you*...

Additionally, I have received word that John Beaumont, the President of the California State Association of Letter Carriers will also attend this month's meeting. His primary agenda is to do whatever possible to make you understand the crucial importance of becoming more active Letter Carriers. Apathy is something which we cannot afford.

Many of you younger members are the future leaders of this organization. Take this opportunity. Begin to lead. Become active...

# OFFICIAL NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF NALC "GOLDEN EMPIRE" BRANCH 782

## NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the election of officers of NALC Branch 782 will be held at the regular Branch meeting on September 23, 2008 at 7:30 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office located at 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing to the Branch Recording Secretary within three (3) days after the nomination is made. Nominations may be submitted in writing provided that they are received by the Branch Recording Secretary prior to the closing of nominations at the regular branch meeting in September. Candidates may accept nominations for only one office. Upon nomination, every nominee must certify that he or she had not served as a supervisor for the 24 months prior to being nominated.

Nominations will be held for the following Branch offices: **President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, three (3) Trustees; and, MBA/Health Benefits Representative.**

By virtue of the position, Branch 782 President shall be a delegate to both the National and State Conventions.

The term of office will be two (2) years.



## ELECTION



The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 25, 2008 at 7:30 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California.

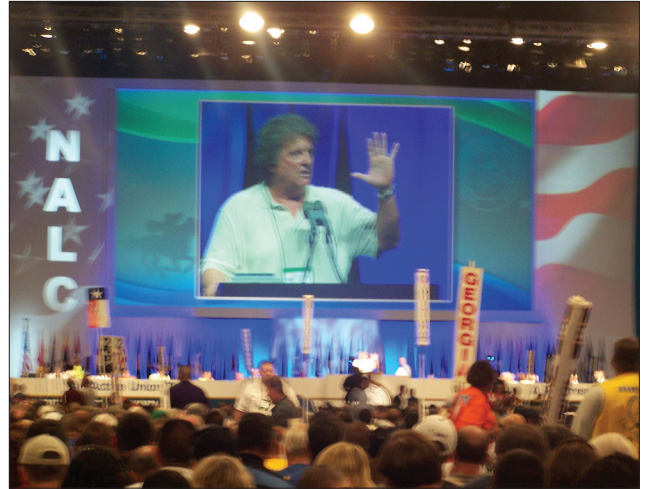
Any member who, for any reason, will be unable to vote on November 25, 2008, may obtain absentee ballots by submitting a signed written request to the Election Committee, Golden Empire Branch 782, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California 93301. Absentee ballots must be requested after nominations have been closed but no later than November 11, 2008.

Write-in votes are not permitted.

# The Vice-Prez Sez...

I was fortunate to get four consecutive weeks off from work this summer. Three of them were my vacation time. The fourth was spent in Boston, MA at the 66th Biennial Convention.

Just under 7,500 Letter Carriers gathered in Boston on July 21st for five days of classes/training and convention sessions. The classes ran from 7:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. and then more classes from 2:15 p.m. until 4:15 p.m. or until all questions were answered. The time in between was for the actual convention. The days can get long, (especially without a lunch break) but to get informed about the future of our jobs as letter carriers and the future of the US Postal Service as a whole, I think it is well worth it.



This is what I want to convey to all of you. THE FUTURE. If you don't plan for it, when it does get here, it may be too late. There were two different classes on the subject of retirement and the planning for this event. There was another class on the TSP (thrift savings plan) program and how best to utilize it.

There was a class on Customer Connect and another on the Internet and it's effects on the mail volume. It is clear to me that there is a common denominator. You need to understand the "connection" between customers and our futures!

As the mail volume declines and with the implementation of FSS (flat sorting system), the Letter Carrier work force will start to decline. The FSS machines have already started in some larger cities. With so many sending e-mails, paying bills on-line and so

## OUT THERE



on, the Customer Connect program has been a great opportunity to bring in new business to the US Postal Service. The NALC has recognized that getting behind this program will keep the US Postal Service strong.

There has been some talk about an early-out (early retirement) option, but President Young said there are still no details. Those of you that are close to retirement may want to get the latest information at [WWW.NALC.ORG](http://WWW.NALC.ORG).

Thanks to Branch 34 of the city of Boston for a great convention. What a beautiful city!

The next convention is scheduled for 2010 right here in California. The host city will be Anaheim. Our Branch is allowed about 28 delegates to represent at a National Convention. I am hoping that with the convention being so close to home, many more "new" faces would attend at least a portion of it.

Get involved. Get educated and know your contract. This is the best way to protect your job for the future.

DARRYL HOLDERMAN  
Branch 782 VICE-President

# Minutes of the June 2008 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery at 7:31 p.m. on the 24th day of June, 2008 at the branch office Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. At Arms, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from 01, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, Camino Media, Delano, Lamont, McFarland, Shafter and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga, Webmaster, Rick Plummer, OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes were read and corrected to reflect the correct spelling of Deven Patterson's name. The minutes were accepted as corrected. The correspondence was read.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Applications were received from Brittnay Peroni, David Velasquez and James Richard Uthman and the new members accepted.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Teresa Ortega reported that the Branch Picnic will be October 12 at Jastro Park from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Contact Teresa if you are interested in helping with the picnic. Basil Zuniga reported that the next newsletter folding will be in August, it will be South Station's turn to fold the newsletter.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Molly Biggar presented the 2008 - 2009 Budget. A discussion was held. Teresa Ortega made a motion to accept the 2008 -2009 Budget. Seconded by Molly Biggar and passed.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Pam Smith discussed the route adjustments at Hillcrest. She said that they seem a little long. Mabel Bullis discussed the route adjustments at Brundage. She also shared that Mike Bettes and Crystal Southwood carried routes on Thursday. Mike Towery reported that Mabel Bullis will be the shop steward at Brundage, Gena Garcia will be the alternate steward at Camino Media and Norma Hamer will be the Shafter steward.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery reported that Donnie Eveland was promoted to regular and sent to Brundage, Paul Greenfield was promoted to regular and sent to East Bakersfield. Mike also said that he would try to get another PTF meeting in July or as soon as it can be arranged. The stations made reports. Carl Summers the senior carrier in Wasco has retired. Webmaster, Rick Plummer asked for articles.

Jeni Magana, the youngest child of deceased carrier Rudy Magana, will perform a free concert on June 26 at the American Legion hall. Jerry Patterson asked the names of members who passed away this year and members who have retired this year. Brad Smith shared his adventures on a one month motorcycle road trip of over 7,000 miles.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that \$9,267.71 was collected for the month.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$48,799.57
Dues and Income	\$13,614.50
Interest Income	\$ 14.34
Total Balance	\$62,428.41
Total Expenses	\$ 7,156.94
Ending Balance	\$55,271.47

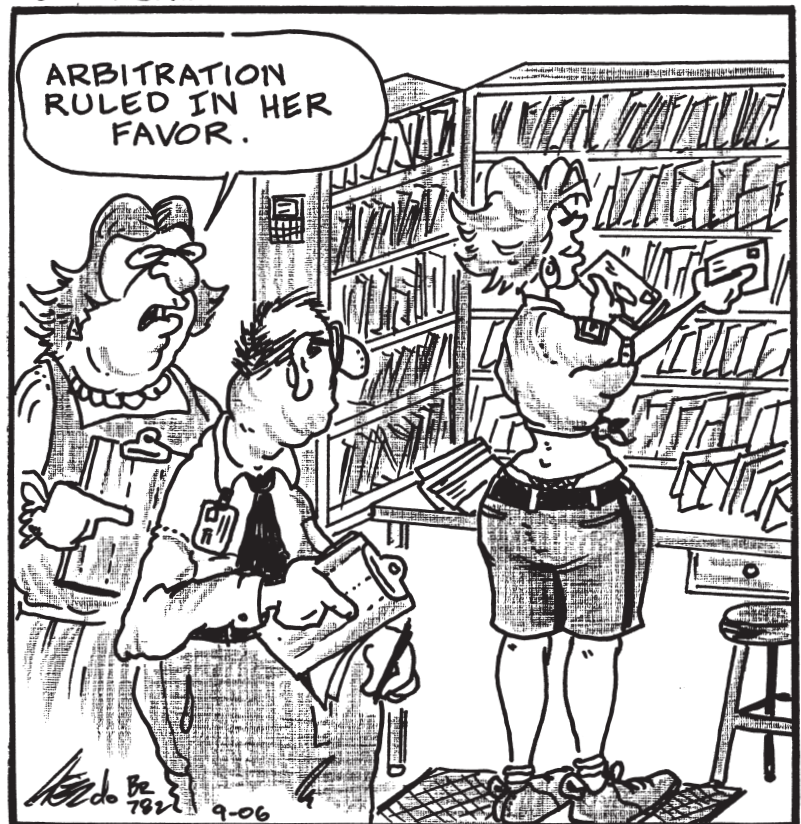
The 50/50 MDA Drawing was won by Rick Plummer. The raffle for \$50.00 would have been won by Pat Kennedy who was not present.

There were 40 members present.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES  
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

## OUT THERE



# Minutes of the July 2008 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery at 7:32 p.m. on the 22nd day of July, 2008 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by OWCP Representative, Rick Gerdes. All members of the Executive Board were present except Darryl Holderman, Anita Holderman and Jerry Patterson who were attending the National Convention. Rick Gerdes, OWCP Rep was present, as were the stewards from 01, 05, 07, 08, 09, Camino Media, McFarland and Shafter. The minutes of the June 24, 2008 meeting were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Applications were received from Barbara K. Wilde and Britany A. Pieroni.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Norma Hamer reported that the Shafter route adjustment were effective on Monday. Mike Towery reported that he went to Ridgecrest last Thursday and spent 12 hours there working on adjustments and grievances. He also reported that Bakersfield has hired 8 more TE's. All

residual positions will be withheld for clerks be excessed from the remote bar coding sites.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike reported that Darryl Holderman, Anita Holderman, Diana Chavez, Jerry Patterson, Pam Smith, Basil Zuniga and Jerry Patterson are attending the National Convention in Boston. He also reported that the clerks, mail handlers and some supervisors will be offered early outs.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita's report will be given at the next meeting.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$55,271.47
Dues and Income	\$13,455.80
Interest Income	\$ 14.45
Total Balance	\$68,741.72
Expenses	\$19,464.62
Ending Balance	\$49,277.10

The MDA Drawing was won by Dicie Wilder. The Drawing for \$100.00 would have been won by Rosaura Cardenas who was not present. There were 21 members present. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES  
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

## DOWNTOWN STATION

Dale Pearce  
Javier Cruz

## SOUTH STATION

*100% Union!!!*

## EAST BAKERSFIELD

R. A. Guerrero

## HILLCREST

M. M. Henry

## BRUNDAGE

David Kinglee  
J. Kaur  
V. Guerrero  
G. Singh  
R. R. Torres

## DOLE COURT

Susan Webb  
Alice Schultz  
R. M. Byington

## NON-MEMBER LIST August 2008

### STOCKDALE

Ron Huston

### CAMINO MEDIA

F. Medina, Jr.

### ARVIN

*100% Union!!!*

### AVENAL

J. T. Howery

### BORON

*100% Union!!!*

### CALIFORNIA CITY

R. A. Day

### DELANO

J. E. Fleming  
C. V. Quebral

### EDWARDS

*100% Union!!!*

### LAMONT

*100% Union!!!*

### McFARLAND

B. A. Ibarra

### MOJAVE

*100% Union!!!*

### RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce  
H. G. Blanco  
A. M. Connell  
H. R. Jacobson  
T. K. Miller  
R. M. Nokes

### SHAFTER

L. M. New  
I. Cedillos, Jr.

### TAFT

B. W. Krier  
K. J. Hughes  
T. M. Phillips

### TEHACHAPI

V. L. Johnson

### TRONA

S. L. Walent  
B. R. Dame  
K. K. Treat

### WASCO

M. D. Voights

# 2008 NALC HBP Info

NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
*** Mental & Substance Precert.	1-877-468-1016
Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Hearing Impaired	1-800-238-1217
*** CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
*** Durable Medical Eqpt.	1-888-636-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
Nurse Assistant (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
***CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quest Diagnostics (Lab Services)	1-877-220-6252
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-784-8797
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
**** Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-7721213

\* Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by the Plan. Must notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates. \*\* Mail order drug prescription program long term (maintenance drugs) 60 day supply: \$8 generic, \$24 name brand; 90 day supply: \$12 generic, \$35 name brand. Retail Pharmacy, you pay 25% . MEDICARE 60 day supply: \$7 generic, \$20 name brand; 90 day supply: \$10 generic, \$30 name brand. Network Retail Pharmacy you pay 15% of the cost of the prescription. Prior approval required for some drugs. Must call the Plan. \*\*\* **Prior Approval Required.** \*\*\*\* Asthma and Diabetis.



Branch 782  
Health Benefit  
Representative

Mark  
Ramirez

(661)  
834-5011

**NALC Prescription Drug Program**  
P.O. Box 94465  
Palatine, IL 60094-4465

Out of Network Pharmacy Claim  
NALC Drug Prescription Program  
P.O. Box 52196  
Phoenix, AZ 85012-2196

United Behavioral Health  
P.O. Box 30755  
Salt Lake City, UT 84130-0755  
1-877-468-1016

**NALC Health Benefit Plan**  
20547 Waverly Court  
Ashburn, VA 20149

**Preferred Provider (PPO)**  
**Cost: \$20.00**  
**Co-pay per office visit**

**Preferred Provider (PPO)**  
**Deductible**  
**\$250 Individual**  
**\$500 Self & Family**  
**Per Calendar Year**

## Contact Information

Center for Disease Control	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">http://www.cdc.gov</a>
National Library of Medicine	<a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov">http://www.nlm.nih.gov</a>
American Public Health Assoc.	<a href="http://www.alpha.org">http://www.alpha.org</a>
American Cancer Society	<a href="http://www.cancer.org">http://www.cancer.org</a>
American Heart Association	<a href="http://www.americanheart.org">http://www.americanheart.org</a>
American Lung Association	<a href="http://www.lunusa.org">http://www.lunusa.org</a>
Diabetes Foundation	<a href="http://www.diabetis.org">http://www.diabetis.org</a>
Muscular Dystrophy Association	<a href="http://www.mdausa.org">http://www.mdausa.org</a>
JAMA Asthma Information Center	<a href="http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma">http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma</a>
Your Personal Health Record	<a href="http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp">http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp</a>
National Patient Safety	<a href="http://www.npsf.org">http://www.npsf.org</a>

# In Jerry's World

Coming from a small office (six routes), it is hard to understand how we can be told that we are "overstaffed" when one of the Letter Carriers retires. The mail on that route still has to be delivered.

But, that's only one thing that has me confused about how the USPS operates.

I came in on my day off recently. It was a circular day. I carried my whole route, drove back, parked and unloaded, clocked back in from the street and then turned in my accountables. By the time I clocked out it was 16.18.

When I came to work the next morning, I was informed by management that I had gone into penalty time by eighteen hundredths and that I was going to be in big trouble. I was even told something by the manager: "I think you did it on purpose just to prove a point." All I know is that I just did my job. But, because I went into penalty, they think that I am trying to prove something.

I don't have to prove that I have a long route. Most people can't finish it in eight hours so they give away part of it. When I ask for help, management acts like I am trying to get away with something and that I should be able to do my route every day without help.

So here I am confused. In my mind, I would think that everybody would know that every day is different. The mail is different every day. Things on the street can be different every day. Some days everyone wants to stop you to ask you a question, ask for a 3775, ask you to wait while they finish that letter that they want you to take. Sometimes the lights always turn red just as you drive up, maybe there is an accident that you have to slow down for. The list can go on and on. Sometimes the mail is really light and we can get done more quickly.

Everybody knows this. Right? Hmmm... Well, maybe management does know this, but they sure don't want to deal with this reality. They want to look at how well the numbers look and how well they got the job done. In reality, the way *we* work is what gets "The Job" done. "The Job" is delivering the mail safely, courteously, accurately and professionally.

Within the last few months, we have had 3999's done on our routes. And, management decided to adjust the routes based on the declining mail volume. At the time we were counted, there was no volume.

On June 26, we were called into the office to let us know what changes were going to be made to the routes based on our 3999's. The day that they went with me, I really had no mail whatsoever (compared to what I had been getting) and ended up with one hour undertime. Thank God for the months earlier when the volume was more "normal". They took the average for the comparison weeks and it ended up that my route was eight hours and ten minutes long.

Management comes up to me to ask, "How are you going to be today?" Based on the mail that I have, I tell them that I should be okay. They challenge this by implying that I don't have eight hours worth of work.

You can absorb so much, but when the numbers don't lie they try to push for more just to see if you will work extra hard to make their numbers look better.

But, at least on this one issue, I'm not confused. I've heard that the USPS gives bonuses to those managers who beat "the numbers".

In reality, we should be the ones getting the bonuses because we are the ones that provide the service! We sweat in the summertime! We deal with the rainy days! In other parts of the country, Letter Carriers have to deal with blizzards, hurricanes, and tornadoes! Oh...of course, the supervisors and managers are in the office working out ways to make those numbers better. (By the way, how often do you see any management folks out there on the street on the days when the temperature is spiking over a hundred degrees?)

I remember one time at Christmas time after management got their bonuses. I asked if the Postmaster could treat everyone to a \$25 gift certificate. He responded that he couldn't afford it. (Again, this is in an office with six routes...) Three months later, he gave his supervisor a check for \$700.

So, while I'm still confused about some things, when I think about it it does make sense. You just have to picture a two story out house. Management gets to go into the door on the second story. And, you can picture the rest.

JERRY PATTERSON

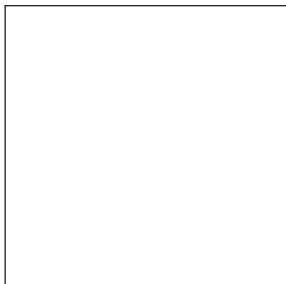


# What is an NALC Convention All About??

The 66th Biennial National Convention was held in the historic city of Boston, Massachusetts. There was just not enough free time to take in all that Boston has to offer. Seven delegates from Branch 782 made the trip. This was the first convention for John Ortega. It was great to have a “first timer” in our group.



Branch 782 Financial Secretary Anita Holderman poses for moment by (S&G) National Business Agent “Manny” Peralta .



I’m still amazed when I enter the convention floor. At the 2008 Convention there were over 7,400 letter carriers in attendance representing 670 branches in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and the US Virgin Islands. As you walk along the convention floor, you may catch a portion of a conversation. You don’t know the people talking. You’ve never been to the city or town they are from. Heck, you’ve never even heard of that place. Yet, you can insert a name from your office and you have probably had a similar conversation.

Senator Hillary Clinton addresses NALC delegates.

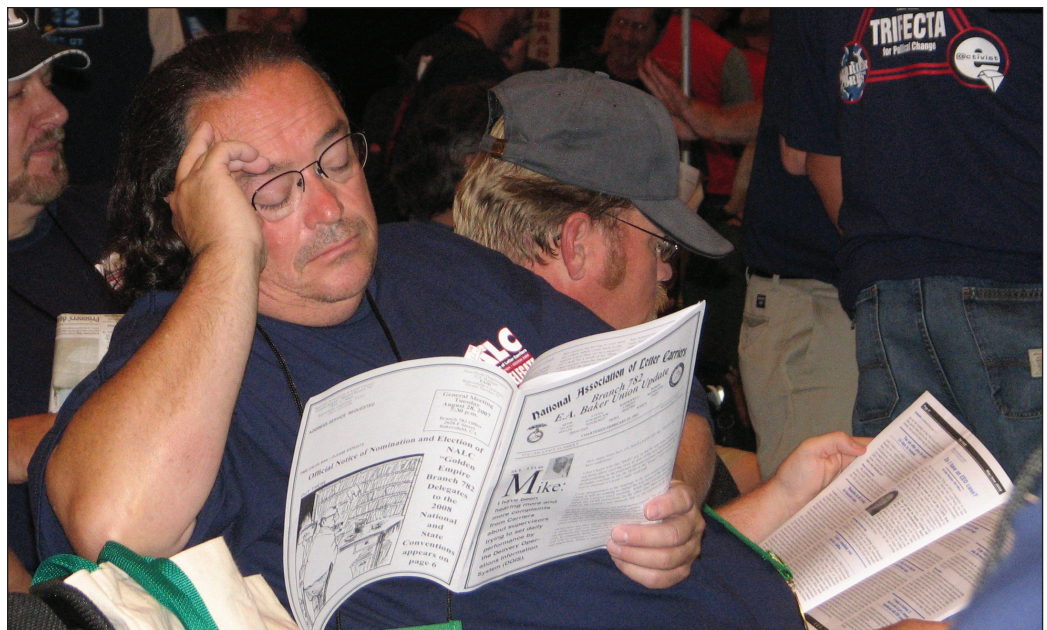
Each day is different and we get to hear many different people address us. During Monday’s session, former Democratic presidential candidate Senator Hillary Clinton addressed the delegates. She was made an honorary NALC member. In another day’s session, a ceremony celebrating the dedication of the NALC Headquarters in Washington D.C. as the “Vincent R. Sombrotto Building” was held. A bust of his likeness was unveiled, and he addressed all of the delegates with an emotional and heartfelt message.



Every day started early with some seven or eight different workshops which began at 7:30 in the morning. Each of the workshops were attended by almost a thousand delegates. The actual convention started at 10 a.m. and ran until 2 p.m. And, there was no break for lunch! The convention just runs straight through the day. There were about six more workshops which began fifteen minutes after the day’s session ended and lasted until around 5 p.m. Some of the workshops were repeats because delegates had to prioritize which classes to attend and some were only offered once. (Anyway, if you do the math, that’s about a nine and a half hour day...not counting any travel time to and from the hotels on the buses.)

For Branch 782, the preparation for an NALC National Convention starts months (and even years) in advance. Hotel reservations, airfare/mileage, per diems are budgeted for.

Branch members have to meet the criteria to become “compensated delegates”. To qualify to have your room, transportation and meals paid for by your Union, you must be a member in good standing and you need to attend 10 of 12 union meetings prior to the date of the convention. (This criteria is a little different if you live outside the city of Bakersfield.)



Terry Ehlers, Utah State Association OWCP Representative, reads our *E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE* which I passed out during the convention while another delegate reads the San Francisco Branch newsletter.



Branch 782 National Convention delegates (left to right) Diana Chavez, Jerry Patterson, Pam Smith, Basil zuniga, John Ortega, Darryl Holderman and Anita Holderman enjoying some time together. It was the day after Jerry's birthday, and a celebration was in order.

This is a commitment of your time and effort, but one which is well worth it! You personally see and hear the effort and the level of commitment your NALC leaders put forth in the jobs they were elected to do for every single Letter Carrier. NALC President Bill Young, his executive board and all of the National Business Agents are in attendance. Also, many of the NALC staff at the NALC Health Benefit Program and others offices are there. *They are all there and you can talk to any one of them!*

There were a variety of classes offered to all the delegates. There was a class on the NALC health benefit plan and another on branch publications (newsletters and web sites). There were several workshops geared towards a legislative and political agenda. There were sessions that covered subjects such as Customer Connect; MDA; the Food Drive; and, the internet and how it is affecting mail volume. Retirement planning; Safety and Health; and a class on OWCP basics were also offered



Hailing from Branch 11 in Chicago, IL, William Trotter reads one of our past newsletters.

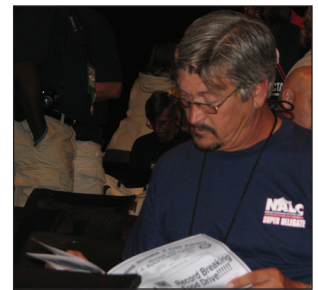
As I mentioned before, there is a lot of preparation before attending a convention. One task you may not be aware of is this. The week prior to the convention, Basil (our newsletter editor) will box up all the extra newsletters that have accumulated in the two years since the last convention (this year there were a little over 2,200). He will then ship the boxes to the hotel that our delegates are staying at. He will pick a morning for our group

to meet and we then distribute the newsletters to the convention floor before the delegates come in for that day's session. (Divide those 2,200 newsletters by seven and you know how many I "delivered"! It's kind of cool to see delegates from all over the country reading our newsletter from Bakersfield and enjoying Fred Acedo's cartoons!

During some down time, our group got together and enjoyed a few pubs. Basil, John, Darryl and I took a tour at the Samuel Adams Brewery. We were taught the proper Bostonian way to appreciate beer!

The convention experience is one that *every* NALC member should do. You should know first-hand what your Union is doing for you and your fellow Carrier. I would like to express my gratitude to all of my Union Brothers and Sisters for sending me to represent this Branch as a delegate.

ANITA HOLDERMAN  
NALC Branch 782 Financial Secretary



Bart Duplissey (Poca City, OK Branch 1730) reviews some of the cartoons and articles.



Branch Vice-President Darryl Holderman living up to his title—he's keeping barrels of Sam Adams beer from leading to more vice in America.

# **RESTORING THE PROMISE, REBUILDING THE DREAM**

The headline speaks for itself. The 66th Biennial convention of NALC came to order on Monday July 21st at 10.00am which is not the start of day for your elected fellow delegates. Branch 782 chose to send seven delegates Darryl & Anita Holderman, Pam Smith, John Ortega, Jerry Patterson, Basil Zuniga and myself and with great admiration I believe they represented Branch 782 proudly.

These delegates attended classes and seminars prior to attending the convention which meant starting at the cracked of dawn each morning. I myself feel proud and thankful that I was elected to represent Branch 782 and know that all the other delegates appreciate your trust in choosing them as well.

On Monday President Young challenged every delegate in attendance at the convention to take the lead in rebuilding the middle class through political action. In his statement he expressed concerns and conviction that “We can change this country and get back on track to once again become the middle class country we still hold in our hearts.”



We are letter carriers and we must do our job to secure it, emphasizing volunteering to help campaign, contributing to COLCPE and campaigning “to stop postal management from contracting out” and the passage of the Freedom Employee Free Choice Act to ease the way for workers to organize unions to fight for better wages & benefits. With great enthusiasm he believes the letter carriers will do the right thing and go out and persuade other carriers to do their part and save our lively hood the postal service and the middle class of America.

Senator Hillary Clinton was a key note speaker she graciously thank NALC for their tireless efforts in her long primary campaign. She spoke of a vision to take back our country and put it back on the right track and then told delegates she praised NALC with sincere gratitude.



She stated “I love being with you letter carriers” at the end of her addressed she stated “Signed, sealed, delivered I’m yours.”

Clinton went on to say that she began to know Barrack Obama while on her campaign and that now we must stand strong and elect him in order to gain our country back.

After delivering her addressed President Young ask the delegates to make her an honorary delegate and it was unanimously approved she ended with a request from the delegation for a resolution to have NALC endorse Barrack Obama which was passed by the delegates.

Numerous guest speakers attended and spoke throughout the week, one first time guest ever to speak was invited Alan Kessler chairman of the Board of Governors of United States Postal Service he delivered a message long overdue “that postal management recognizes the critical role carriers play in USPS’ success and the importance of good labor relations and other speakers were the President of the APWU William Burrus, President Emeritus James Rademacher, Rep. John Tierney (D-MA), Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA), Rep. John McHugh (R-NY) and many other speakers.

Motions ran high Tuesday as President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto was honor with the rededication of the union’s National headquarters building being renamed in his honor. Some of his family attended the ceremony and his family unveiled a bronze shoulder statuette. President Sombrotto’s emotions ran high as he reminisced about sacrifices his family made, his memories of being part of NALC union and being part of history. Cheers, tears and applauses came from the delegate floor.

President Sombrotto will be missed but President Young stated “he was taught by the best” he took me under his wing and here



I am today from a small branch from California. First time ever three Presidents were in attendance at a convention President William Young, President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto and President Emeritus James Rademacher

On a much somber note, President Young announced Wednesday the death of a delegate. Jim Stankovich (President of Branch 1427 Santa Clara, California)—and a long time friend of our branch—passed away.

Jim retired as the OWCP rep. years ago and I know he helped numerous members from our branch with their OWCP cases. He'll be greatly missed by all us including Connie Crimmons who could never pronounce his name correctly. She would say Jim Stick-ko-vich or Stink-ko-vich and Jim would always just smile and laugh with us knowing she just couldn't pronounce his name correctly. Jim, rest in peace and God Bless!

The United States Postal Service and the NALC have a long road ahead. We must work and fight together and deliver these messages that President Young and Chairman Alan Kessler stated to us in their addresses to the delegation. We need to spread the word to all postal employees, NALC members and family members to help in our fight to keep the working middle class together.

In doing this, struggling with the volume of mail going down and revenue losses, so therefore we must sell Customer and Business Connect and make sure the right Presidential candidate is elected.

If you, as a member, have never attended a union meeting, make an effort and attend your

first meeting ever because as you may not know this will be the fight of your life to keep the Postal Service alive. The young generation of today will have to fight harder than ever in order to stay competitive with other competitors that will be fighting for their livelihood as well.

I know that those who have less than ten years of service will have to stay active in the political arena. Others like the Executive board and myself will be moving on to retirement over the horizon. Leadership will play a major role in the survival of this union and now is the time to get active. Do not take for granted that the other person or your fellow co-worker will take on the challenge take the challenge. We must survive the challenges ahead. Do your part!

DIANA CHAVEZ  
NALC Branch 782 Legislative Liaison

Basil, Please share this with everyone in newsletter. Thanks Diana

## FERS Sick Leave Reimbursement Moves Forward

Employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) would receive credit for unused sick leave towards their retirement annuities under a bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives last night. Added as a provision of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, HR 1108, the bill would treat unused sick leave similarly to that of employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Introduced by Rep. James Moran, D-VA, long a champion of retirement fairness for FERS employees, the bill would provide credit towards retirement annuities for 75% of sick leave for those retiring within the first three years of enactment, and full credit for those retiring after three years. "Our current use-it-or-lose-it sick leave system for FERS employees hurts productivity and increases training costs," said Moran. As passed last night, the bill is more generous than Moran's previous proposal, HR 5573, which would have paid FERS employees a lump-sum upon retirement for unused sick leave up to \$10,000.

The bill, which faces a veto-threat from President Bush, was passed by a veto-proof margin of 326-102 (Rep. Kevin McCarthy, D-CA voted yes for this). It now heads to the Senate, where a spokeswoman for Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), the sponsor of the bill, said "We're hopeful it'll move in the fall," after Congress returns from its August recess. However, the current Senate bill does not contain the FERS sick leave provision, and the ultimate fate of the provision may be decided in a House-Senate conference committee if the Senate is able to pass its version of the bill.

"NALC has worked closely with friends on Capitol Hill to make sure that hard-working Letter Carriers are rewarded for doing the right thing and coming to work as they near retirement," President Young said. "As the Senate starts considering the bill, I will call on Letter Carriers in every corner of the country to call and email their Senators to encourage them to support this provision."

Also in the bill are provisions that would automatically enroll new Federal employees in the Thrift Savings Plan's G Fund and add a Roth 401(k) option for all Thrift Savings Plan Participants.

# Guest Editorial:

## The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

By Roxanne Luce  
Executive Vice President  
NALC Branch 133

*During the last Union meeting in June, many questions came up about FMLA, so our Steward class in July was on FMLA and attendance related discipline.*

First, I was delighted to see in attendance some of our members who were not Stewards. I would like to encourage more of you to attend that training. There is a large range of topics we would like to cover in these classes the topic covered is normally what we know is the hot topic with the Postal Service at the time of the training.

Due to the number of questions on FMLA asked during the last Union meeting, I am reprinting a portion of a previous article.

The Branch has recently seen an increase in discipline for attendance issues. This ranges from unscheduled sick leave to being late to work. In some of these cases, we have discovered that the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) should cover the reason for both. Management does have a responsibility to try to determine if unscheduled absences are FMLA related. If they believe, it might be they should be providing the Letter Carrier with a Publication 71. The Publication 71 out lines what is covered by FMLA and what your rights are under FMLA. I will attempt to provide a brief description of the FMLA rights of Letter Carriers. You can get more in-depth information on NALC website at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). Go to the department tab, select contract administration, and on the left side you will see a link for FMLA.

To qualify for FMLA, a Letter Carrier must have worked for the Postal Service for at least 12 months and must have worked 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the beginning of the FMLA leave. The 1,250 hours must be actual work hours, not including annual leave or sick leave.

FMLA can be used for the following (from Article 10 in the JCAM):

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### Leave Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) applies to Postal Employees. The Postal Service regulations implementing the Act are found in ELM Section 515. The law entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 workweeks of job protected absence during any 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

The birth of an employee's child and to care for that child during the first year after birth; circumstances may require that FMLA leave begin before the actual date of birth of a child, i.e. before the birth of a child for prenatal care or if the mother's condition prevents her from performing the functions of her position.

The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; the employee may be entitled to FMLA leave before the actual placement or adoption of a child when, for example, the employee is required to attend counseling sessions, appear in court, or consult with attorneys or doctors representing the birth parent prior to placement. FMLA coverage expires one year after the date of the placement.

Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job. An employee is "unable to perform the functions of the position" when the health care provider finds that the employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform any one of the essential functions of the employee's position.

To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition, this requires medical certification that an employee is "needed to care for" a family member and encompasses both physical and psychological care. For the purpose of the FMLA the following definitions apply.

A **parent** is defined as a biological parent or an in loco parentis. In loco parentis is a person who acts as a parent toward a son or daughter, with day to day responsibilities to care for and financially support a child, or a person who had such responsibility for the employee when the employee was a child.

A **spouse** is defined as a husband or wife as defined or recognized under State law. The law of the State where the employee resides governs the determination whether a person is a spouse. This includes common law marriages recognized by the state of residence. However, the Defense of Marriage Act provides that same gender marriages are not recognized.

A **son or daughter** is defined as biological, adopted, foster, in loco parentis (defined above under definition of parent), legal ward or step child under the age of 18; or a child 18 or over who has a disability as defined under the Rehabilitation Act and the disability makes the person incapable of self care.

**Disability** under the Rehabilitation Act is defined as an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity. A major life activity, does not include things like cooking or cleaning, but are instead, the more fundamental and basic activities central to a person's life: e.g., seeing, breathing, hearing, eating, walking, standing, speaking, learning. Substantially limits means a significant restriction as compared to the average person in the general population. This includes consideration of the nature and severity of the impairment, its duration, and permanent or long term impact of the impairment.

Incapable of self-care is the need for assistance or supervision to provide daily care in 3 or more "activities of daily living": grooming, bathing, eating, hygiene, cooking, cleaning, paying bills, using a phone, or post office, shopping.

There is no "laundry list" of serious health conditions. Other than pregnancy, the circumstances determine whether a condition is serious, not the diagnosis. Therefore, every request for FMLA leave must be considered on a case-by-case basis, applying the definitions of a serious health condition, as defined by the statute and regulations, to the information provided by the employee and the employee's health care provider.

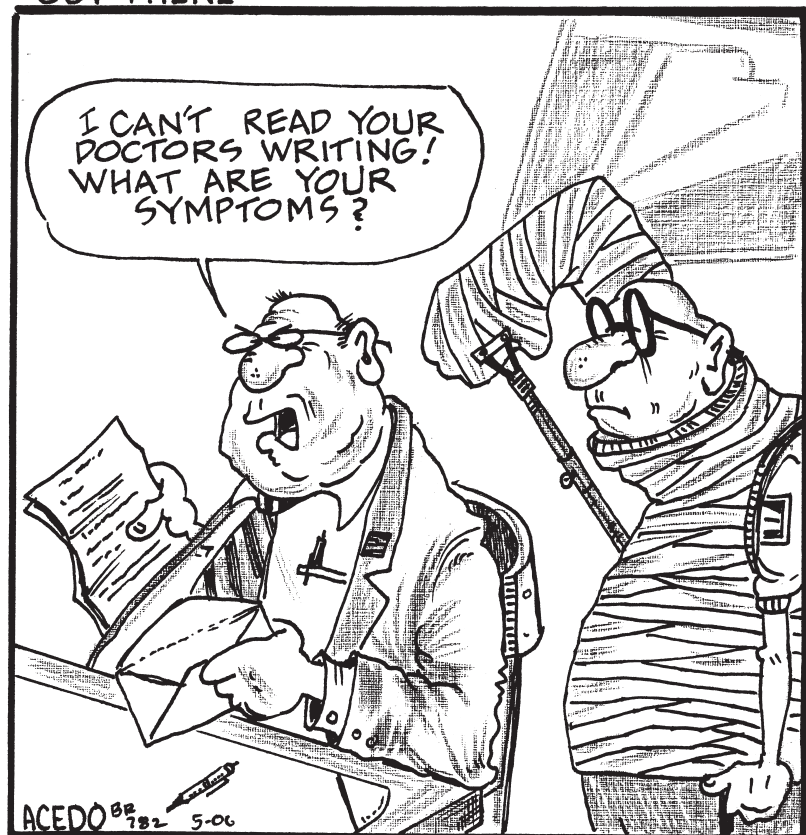
Management is within its rights to ask employees about the circumstances of their condition in order to determine whether absences may be protected under the FMLA and/or whether absences are for a condition which requires the ELM 865 return to work procedures.

FMLA is not a new type of leave. To take leave under FMLA you will need to use either, sick leave, annual leave or LWOP or a combination.

The type of leave you can use will depend on the circumstances of what the leave is requested for. For example if it is for your own serious health condition you may take sick leave, annual leave or LWOP. If it is for your dependant child you may be able to take a combination of Leave for Dependent care which also qualifies as FMLA and use sick leave (up to 80 hours), annual leave or LWOP. If the request for FMLA is for your ailing parent you would have to use annual leave or LWOP.

The Family Medical Leave act is a law and it is there to protect you from discipline for the absences it is used for.

### OUT THERE



I would caution you to be careful not to abuse your sick leave. Remember there is still the requirement to work 1250 hours to qualify. We often see letter carriers with a qualifying condition but they have not worked enough hours in the previous year to qualify for FMLA that are then subject to discipline for absences.

This is a portion of an abridged article which was originally published by Sacramento, CA Branch 133 in their August 2008 *Swing Room Gazette*.

# Brundage Rocks!!!

I am so proud of Brundage Station for their enormous effort to collect nearly 25,000 pounds. This amount allowed our station to win a competition between us and East Bakersfield Station.



Station Manager Mike Bettes draws the route he will carry at Brundage.

As a result, Mike Bettes (station manager) and Crystal Southwood (supervisor) carried a route of our choice! I want to again take an opportunity to thank Mike,

Crystal and Jaime (East Bakersfield Station supervisor) for committing themselves to this competition to help fuel participation.



I want everyone to know it was a group effort and everyone in our station contributed. Believe me, it was such a sight to see! I was in awe as everyone put more and more effort into increasing the impact that we had.

The success of this competition has fueled conversation to continue it again next year and to get more stations involved. Is anyone up for the challenge? Are any supervisors up for the sportsmanship?

I love my co-workers! I am proud to say that I work with such a great, caring bunch. Our station may suck at bowling but we challenge anyone to beat us in foodraising!

MABEL BULLIS

A Proud Brundage Letter Carrier!!!

## Mike Bettes Reflects on His Day

Mike Bettes started with the post office as a carrier in December 1986. He was then promoted to Supervisor at Stockdale in 1997. He is now the Station Manager at Brundage Post Office as of 2006. Mike did Route 721.



**1. How long has it been since you carried mail? Do you miss being a carrier? Why or why not?**

I believe I stopped carrying mail in 1997. I really do miss carrying mail. I miss the freedom of being outdoors and I miss the rapport with customers.

**2. Would you ever consider going back to carrying mail?**

I did consider going back to carry mail for a few years after my promotion. Not so much anymore except when I'm in trouble for something. :)

**3. What has changed since you carried? Are things better or worse?**

Interesting question, from my viewpoint behind the desk alot has changed with automation, casing equipment, and the tools management has to monitor performance. However, after carrying for a day, I realized the job is really the same. Once I was out on the street it felt as though nothing had changed.

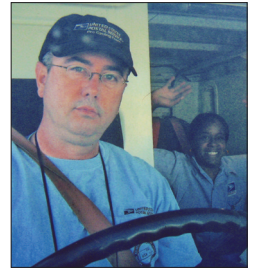
**4. What is the hardest thing that new people have to deal with when they start carrying mail?**

(Jokingly) "ME"!! Not really.

**5. Did you get all the scan point scanned when you carried?**

**How many accountable mail and parcels did you have?**

Yes, I hit all the scan points on the street. My boss for the day, Kim Pumphrey, made sure to "instruct" me when I would forget something. I think I had over 1000 accountables (ok, maybe 12 but it seemed like 1000) for the day but only a couple of parcels.



**6. How did you do when you carried in the efficiency to your workload that day?**



I beat my DOIS time if that what you're asking. But in all fairness the day I carried the mail was extremely light and no circulars.

**7. When is the next time you will carry? Will there be a next time?**

I really don't know when or if I will carry again. I do know that if the office wants to have a contest next year, I would certainly agree to carry again. It's a great cause.

**8. Supervisors complain we have time wasting practices, did you discover anything while carrying to change that perception?**

I think Kim could answer that question better than I can.

**9. Are there any suggestions you would like to share with the carriers?**

Yes, I believe carriers have an opportunity to be a positive influence on someone every day. Your attitude with a customer might be the highlight of someone's day. Take advantage.



**10. Besides good sportsmanship and fueling the Food Drive competition, what is your overall thoughts on the experience?**

I had a fantastic time. The fun and spirit in the office was more than I imagined and I truly felt proud to be a member of the Brundage team. Most importantly,

though was the wonderful contribution the employees at the office made to the families in Kern County.

Thanks for the questions. I enjoyed answering them. In closing, I would like to commend the Brundage Team for their efforts. When the contest began, I thought a couple hundred dollars would be a reasonable goal. Over \$ 2400 raised by a group so small is truly amazing! At the office we have talked about how fortunate we are to have the jobs and opportunities we have and how we are in positions to give back. The results of this contest show the true spirit of the employees at Brundage.

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Kim Pumphrey was the carrier on the route who teamed up with Mike Bettes for that day. Kim has been with the Post Office since 1995. She started out as a clerk, then a T.E., now she is a T-6 carrier.

**Being in the back seat, observing, how did you feel the manager did?**

Great, Good.

**Even though there wasn't a 3rd bundle, did you think he had a comparable workload to our day to day?**

The work load was very light that day.

**What time did he leave and get done?**

He started the street at 9am and returned by 2:30pm. (no swings)

**Were all the rules followed? 30 min lunches? 1/2 mile distance?**

Yes.

**What do you think of the experience? Do you think managers / supervisors should take one day out of the year to carry mail to not lose track of what we do day to day?**

No comments. Mike was a very good carrier. He carried for over 10 years so he knows what we go through.



*Continued on next page...*



## What are your comments on this experience of having the Station Manager and a Supervisor carry mail?



Mike is a very nice and professional person and good to have in a management position. I have a great job with the Post Office and to be surrounded by caring people is a blessing.

*Beatriz B. Munoz - Casual at the Plant since December 2000, PTF since 2006*

Although the managers we had carry mail are very competent and willing to work with carriers rather than against them, I believe that all managers should be required (in the job description) to perform the employees' jobs for a minimum of 2 weeks to keep up on how it should be maintained and the processes involved.



*Bonnie Hershberger - With the Post Office since 1994*

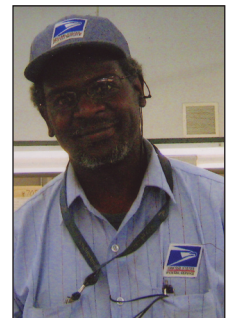


Mike has a great outlook and sportsmanship when he was carrying. He made it look fun.

*Dhalwant Dhaliwal - Carrier since 2000*

NOOOOBody beats Brundage in fundraising. Thanks Mike and Crystal. It was fun.

*Elroy Miller - With the Post Office since February 1991*





Mike and Crystal had a very good attitude about carrying mail. All supervisors should carry mail once in a while to remind them of the conditions on the streets and weather we as carriers have to go through, that not every time we give them a time to come back is going to be correct. Good job Mike and Crystal!!!

*Tony Robles – PTF since May 2006*

To be totally honest, almost all carriers gripe and complain when it comes to the Food Drive. Then when we see how much good we did for the community that it makes you, as a Carrier, feel awesome. Mike is a great station manager to work for, as well as our Supervisors, Kris and Crystal.



*Enoch Moya – PTF since January 2006*

## Cyrstal had no phones ringing!

Crystal Southwood has been with the post office since 1997. She started as a carrier at the Downtown Station then moved herself towards being a 204-B and now she has been a Supervisor at the Brundage Station since 2007. Crystal did Route 717.



**How long has it been since you carried mail? Do you miss being a carrier? Why or why not?**

It has been 2 years. I miss being outside. I enjoyed the freedom of working alone.

**Would you ever consider going back to carrying mail?**

Not on purpose! I loved carrying mail. I carried for 12 years. I look forward to a less physical work environment. Carrying mail is a very physical work.

**What has changed since you carried? Are things better or worse?**

It's all the same for me. Since it's only been a couple of years.

**What is the hardest thing new people have to deal with when they start carrying mail?**

Learning Postal Language, how to handle the mail and numbers! Vehicle number on Route number at address number at time number form number's.

**Did you get all the scan points scanned when you carried? How many accountable mail and parcels did you have?**

Yes, 1 Express, a few certified letters, lots of parcels.

**How did you do when you carried in the efficiency to your workload that day?**

Right on!

**When is the next time you will carry? Would there be a next time?**

Not anticipating any time soon. Not sure if I'll do it again! ... Maybe!

**Supervisors complain we have time wasting practices, did you discover anything while carrying to change that perception?**

No, we had a good full day.

**Are there any suggestions you would like to share with the carriers?**

Yes, be courteous, you are what the public perceives as "the Post Office". We are all depending on you.



*Continued on next page...*

**Besides good sportsmanship and fueling the Food Drive competition, what is your overall thoughts on this experience?**

It was fun to get away from the phones and responsibility of management. Pretty much like if "I were a kid again".



Jessie Subia was the carrier on the route who teamed up with Crystal Southwood for that day. Jessie has been with the Post Office since July 1984.

**Being in the back seat, observing, how did you feel the supervisor did?**

Crystal did very well carrying mail. She followed all the rules and moved quickly and professionally.

**Even though they didn't have a 3rd bundle, did you think they had a comparable work load to our day to day?**

Yes, because mail volume was about medium and parcels were medium and we had about 10 certified letters.

**What time did she leave and get done?**

We left about 9:15am and we were done at about 3:30pm.

**How was the weather that day?**

It was about 94 degrees-warm, but not too hot. Crystal was not ready for the heat.



**Were all the rules followed? 30 minute lunches? ½ mile distance?**

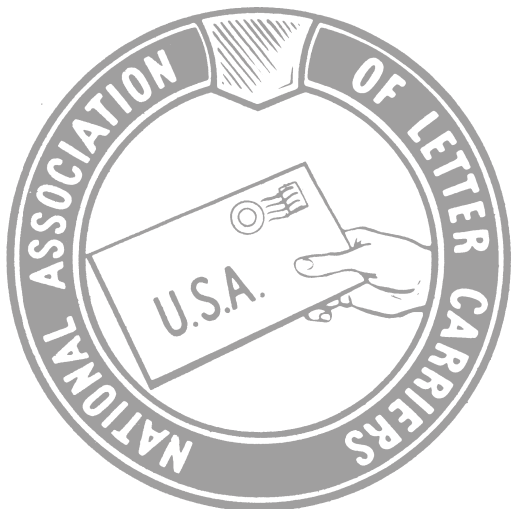
Yes! She even curbed the wheels!



**What did you think of this experience? Do you think managers / supervisors should take one day out the year to carry mail to not lose track of what we do day to day?**

I was dreading it but I figured "they" need to be reminded of just what we do everyday. After a while they forget. I hope we are better appreciated.

# *Brundage Rocks!!!*



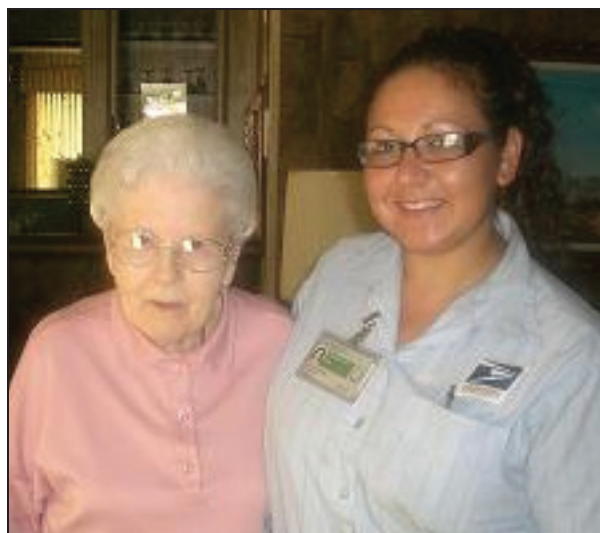
*The almost 25,000 pounds of food generated by Bakersfield's Brundage Station was almost one quarter of the amount totalled by the entire city!*

## Hillcrest Carrier Becomes Hero

On July 17, 2008 RTF Letter Carrier Nicole Aranda was locking up a CBU located on Eastwind Court when she heard a thud sound. She looked over the brick wall and saw 87 year old resident Lois Siemon laying on the ground and bleeding profusely. When Nicole found all entrances locked she was forced to scale the brick wall to assist her. Nicole found Lois Siemon's right wrist cut wide open from her fall from the stairs.

Nicole called 911 for emergency assistance. They instructed her to get a towel and apply light pressure until the ambulance arrived. Nicole went inside, found a towel and the keys to open the gates.

Twenty minutes later, help arrived and Lois was taken to the hospital where she spent two days recovering from her injury which required fourteen stitches.



And from  
the April  
2008  
edition of  
the *Maine  
Letter  
Carrier*



*Dear Dr. Delivery:*

I toil in one of the larger offices in our branch. I was noticing that on Thursday there's only one supervisor riding herd, whereas on most other days ('ceptin Saturday) there are three. It seems to me that things run just as well on Thursday as any other day, proving that one supervisor can do the whole job. Therefore, that supervisor has DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE and should be held to it like us, meaning that we should get rid of a few of them. Wouldn't this save us some money in these troubled financial times?

*Sincerely, "Slugworth"*

*Dear Slugworth:*

You are falling victim to the "less is more" fallacy. Going largely unwatched may be okay once in awhile, but on a regular basis? It's UNTHINKABLE! Lastly, you compared your fellow carriers to a herd. A herd of what? If it's sheep, you need more than one sheepdog nipping at your heels. Personally, I reject your comparison and liken you to mice. The more cats around, the less you'll play.

# Bill Curtis Retires!!

In mid-June 2008, fifty-nine year old Bill Curtis decided that it was time to do more than just talk about retiring. He contacted the official USPS number and began a process which was time consuming.

He plans to write a detailed article in a future newsletter about his experience, what he learned about the process, and some advice to those who are considering retirement.)



Bill says, “Everyone needs to know that there a certain things that you should do at least a year before you plan to retire. There are other things you *need* to do at least six months before you plan to retire. And, there are other things that you *need* to do three months before you plan to retire. After that, the pace accelerates and you need to know that you are going to have to have *all* of your paperwork (DD-214’s if you were in the military; marriage certificates...and if you were married multiple times you are going to need all of those, too and divorce papers, and support papers) etc. and etc. and etc. You need to understand the ramifications of decisions that you are going to make about Life Insurance, Survivors’ Benefits and what to do with money in your Thrift Savings Plan. You also need to read everything that they send you. For example, I didn’t know that there were multiple options with things like Survivors’ Benefits that might fit better into my life. Everybody’s situation is different. But, you need to remember one absolutely crucial thing: Some of the decisions that you make are irreversible. Once you ‘sign on the dotted line’, it’s a done deal.”



And so, after dealing with all of this and more, Bill Cutrits found himself—on August 2, 2008—living out the dream of “that last day at work” with what is probably a Letter Carrier tradition all over the country: A potluck!

It hasn’t exactly been an easy career since that first day on July 28, 1980. In addition to dealing with all of the “normal” things that Letter Carriers contend with, Bill had had to deal with a number of physical ailments. Some of these contributed to hastening his retirement earlier than he would have anticipated or planned for.



Some memories from Bill Curtis’ retirement potluck at South Station.



Bakersfield Postmaster Jim Brouilliard presents Bills Curtis with a retirement award.

All Letter Carriers deal with the fatigue which comes from working in a physically demanding occupation. Weather related conditions make a strenuous job even harder. We can all identify with this; but, on August 16, 2002, Bill underwent hip-replacement surgery! It was an OWCP approved claim. This means that the years of delivering mail had taken their toll. After a three month rehabilitation period, Bill returned to work on a limited duty status and followed up by going back to full-duty on Route 413. Compounded by a bout with Valley Fever a few years later, Bill was never able to put that spring back in his step.

Looking back, Bill remembers that Letter Carriers George Perez, Rudy Aros, Frank Diaz and Margaret Romero were “old timers” that he learned from. When asked which supervisors were the best in his opinion, he responded with no hesitation, “Freddy Castro, Art Ornelas and Keith



Bonita Lewis shows that she knows what to do when a camera is pointed her way. You think Steve Rai knew about it?

begins with the letter “B”. That word is Beer. Through the years he has refined his palate and maintains that micro-brew beer is the only way to go (Lengthwise Beer!). He pities those who drink Budweiser, Miller, Olympia and all of the other “yellow water beers”.

Reynolds.” He only said that there was a four letter supervisor’s name who was the worst.

Bill Curtis has been involved with many Branch 782 activities. Over the course of many years, he has been a Trustee and mentor to many younger Letter Carriers. Although he is a dyed-in-wool Republican, he understands the importance of having the National Association of Letter Carriers. He has never been one to shy away from bringing contrary opinions out in the open. He has always been open to challenging policies and actions which the NALC has undertaken. Part of this is rooted in his political philosophy as a Republican. Most importantly, he is who he is because he cares.

Additionally, anyone who knows Bill knows that one of his favorite words also



Sylvia Reyna getting ready to Ptoluck!



Branch 782 President Mike Towery sharing some of his thoughts during the ceremony at South.

Bill is extremely frugal. After the National Convention in St. Louis, Bill “rescued” twelve cans of Budweiser which would have been left behind in the hotel. He took the beer with him on the plane and, at the layover in Dallas, TX traded the warm beer with a cocktail waitress in an airport bar for twelve fresh, cold Budweisers. This, of course, was pre-9/11.

So what’s in store for Bill? He says that he is definitely going to be spending more time with his his wife, Cindy. Additionally, grandchildren Brigette, Savannah and Sebastian will have a lot more claim on his time now that he won’t have to be standing in line to clock on at South Station.

He seems to be doing a good job, because when he was contacted for this interview he had just been enjoying some of the cooler air up on the mountain at Big Bear. Oh...he was having a beer, too.

# ***Bill Curtis is having a party!!!*** **September 20, 2008—6:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

*Bill is paying for \$500\* worth of the great food! You pay for whatever you want to drink. Plans are underway to provide a karaoke machine. If you have cd’s, bring them and we can all have a good time!!! There is no excuse not to come celebrate with everyone...*

***Cataldo’s Pizzeria***  
***3611 Stockdale Highway***

**\*Bill wants to thank everyone from South Station who honored him with a donation. He’ll use the \$200 to help pay for all of the food at the retirement party!!!!**

# Harrington's Spotlight

## Scuttlebutt

I would like to take to time to acknowledge last month's article by our Assistant to the Editor. I will start off by stating that Jason Munoz wrote a very benevolent article. One in which he emphasizes the point of making sure that carriers take the time to drive safely, to help educate our younger carriers, and that if you think management is looking out for you when you are doing them favors are somewhat demented in that fact.

But I do have to address a few statements that Mr. Munoz reported in his article regarding Driver Safety Program, which was based on hearsay. A few that was aimed at me even though he didn't mention my name. I will address them one at a time. 1st Jason wrote regarding Coaching and Mentoring Observations, "I claimed (as if I am untruthful) that the DSI program would focus on the inexperienced carriers (less than 2 yrs)." If Jason would have asked any Driver Safety Instructor or asked to see the stats of C&M. He would have saw that nearly 90% of our observations have been with carriers with less than 2 yrs of service (is that focused). In my last article I did write every once in awhile we run into older carriers that are doing a great job or might have some unsafe driver habits themselves and we want to help correct those before an negative 4584 or an accident occurs. 2nd Jason writes that that gossip he hears regarding the accuracy or truthfulness of the statements I have made. "The only two people I've heard of being observed by a DSI (same person) are carriers from my station with over 15 yrs of service both experiencing anxiety when being observed." Now looking at our files. We haven't done observations on carriers at his station that have over 15yrs of experience. Two carriers we have observed that is close to that statement have less than 14 yrs both did a great job and don't see how they were stressed out and had anxiety. Anxiety will come typically when a person is feels like their doing something wrong. But I will take Jason's word for it. So since his article, we asked the next 20 carriers that we did observations on if they experience any stress or anxiety while being observed. 20 out 20 said "No". 3rd Jason writes, "I have heard that at least one DSI had gotten it into their

head to use these observations, giving them to management or district management, until our local postmaster expressed his dislike of that idea personally." Let me correct the confabulated conversations that Jason has heard and give the FACTS of that comment. Station supervisors nor management don't even know when we are out there or whom we are observing and will never know. Unless carriers go back to the station and say something themselves. District office gets a copy to input for data only purposes (like my last article mentioned) and last our local postmaster actually thought looking at our observations would help alleviate accidents but he was told that they are only for "Coaching and Mentoring". 4th Jason writes. "That I contended (meaning there is debate) that the carriers had no reason to concern themselves, there is no way that these observations would lead to discipline." Weren't the words I used in my article. I would like to ask Jason from all the things he has heard (anyone else for that matter). Has anyone ever been discipline by a DSI observation since last summer when we started? Has anyone else heard anything? I already know the answer to that. (Zero) It's because station management never see our paperwork and never will. And last Jason writes "Well educated safe carriers means less wasted time in stand-ups, less people observing you on the street, and less need for them to assign carriers to do managements job and stress-out veteran carriers." I would like to divulge Jason that we are not assigned carriers doing supervisors job. We are Driver Safety Instructors that "Coaching and Mentoring Obser-

### OUT THERE



ations” is part of our job description. Which is ironic in his article he asks why older carriers don’t help teach them. Yet Coaching and Mentoring is exactly what that does for our younger carriers. But I do agree with him that if we educate ourselves and do everything the way we are paid to do it. Supervisors are more likely to pass you over when it comes to observations.

## Some Thoughts from J. Munoz

I am not a liar, and took every accounting of events straight from the mouths of the Carriers involved, whom I believe—because they stood to gain nothing by lying. I think the people who will be reading this can judge for themselves who they want to believe.

I do not wish this to become a divisive issue, I have bigger things on my plate. I wrote the article as a caveat, directed toward Carriers, not a personal vendetta. I used no names, and even used gender-neutral terms such as “this person”. Basil gave me a chance to respond “quid pro quo” because Jeff got bitterly specific and aggressive in his tone. Someone wants to call me out, to use my name like a weapon? Good luck, cheers, have a ball...there’s beer that needs drinking.

I would like to invite Mr. Munoz (anyone for that matter) if he ever has the time to sit in one of our classes or to come out on a C&M Observation to see for himself what we actually do. I know that if he saw all the stats, pictures (accidents), unsafe driving habits, vehicle training, and how the program has had an impact on reducing the amount of accidents that we have in our district. He will have a better understanding what DSI’s are doing for our fellow carriers and his opinion would definitely change. I only hope that Mr. Munoz part objective in his article was to voice out some opinions of our fellow carriers and not to

denigrate our position as a DSI or the program itself.

It is great to see young carriers take in part of writing great articles for our newsletter. We need more members like Jason to show interest in that they care about our union and our fellow carriers in the everyday stresses that we have. I hope that Jason will continue to write articles and give a positive spin on our everyday lives.

“Just Another Day in Paradise”  
Jeff Harrington 93305

## *EAP - What is it and how can it help me?*

EAP (Employee Assistance Program) is a benefit that every U.S. Postal Service employee and their families are entitled to. This benefit is provided by the U.S. Postal Service through an inter-agency agreement with Federal Occupational Health Services.

The counselors that you talk to when you call are **NOT** USPS employees.

All counselors are licensed. Your privacy is protected by strict state and federal confidentiality laws and regulations.

The use of EAP is voluntary, private and totally free.

The EAP can help in a number of different subjects such as:

- \* work/personal stress
- \* marital/family issues
- \* anger management
- \* alcohol/drug abuse
- \* financial/legal concerns
- \* grief/bereavement
- \* child/elder care
- \* life changes

There are two ways to use EAP. First, you can use your phone to call 1-800-EAP-4-YOU. This is a very good start!

There is a live body there anytime of the day or night. The EAP representative is there to help you 24/7. If you would first like to be a little more informed on EAP, go to [www.eap4you.com](http://www.eap4you.com). You can see if your particular concern can be addressed. You may find resources you didn’t know were out there.

I strongly encourage you to just surf the site and see what is there. If you are in a crisis, please find help. This program is a great first step. BE WELL!

ANITA HOLDERMAN  
Branch 782 Financial Secretary

## from the editor-guy

I have a Union dream. It is actually a very simple dream. And it is a dream that can actually happen. And, more importantly, I want to share it with you in the hope that some of you can see yourself living this dream.

Let me begin by presenting some information for context.

Seven members of Branch 782 attended the 66th Biennial National Convention in Boston, Massachusetts as “your” delegates.

Part of the NALC Constitution’s Article 4 reads this way: “Each Branch having twenty (20) or less members shall be entitled to one delegate and one vote in the National Convention. Branches having more than twenty (20) members shall be entitled to one delegate and one vote for each twenty (20) members, or fraction thereof.”

So what’s this got to do with you?



Believe It Or Not: One of the resolutions presented to the delegates was whether or not to approve “male unbifurcated garments” (kilts) as uniform issue apparel.

Based on numbers provided to me, in our Branch we have some 570 members (active, retired, Life Members, and associate members).

Here’s where the dream part kicks in! If we were to somehow send as many people to a Convention that we were entitled to, there would be (divide that 570 by 20)...(drum roll)...twenty-three delegates!

I know that Branch 782 Treasurer Molly Biggar is going to faint when she reads this! The costs associated with Conventions can be astronomical and include travel, housing and per-diems and airport long-term parking. Realistically, when discussions are held on how many compensated delegates to send, those decisions ultimately come down to how many the Branch can afford.

I understand that. But let me take you through some thoughts that I’ve had about this.

A dream takes off when a person or an organization can develop an approach to make a goal a reality. Part of the equation is a time factor—How much time do we have to work on getting where we want to go? The second, and most important issue is a very basic one. Is this goal a priority? Thirdly, what other factors come into play which might make the dream more attainable?

So what’s this got to do with you?

The next National Convention will be held in two years. This is a “chunk” of time which can provide for an opportunity to plan and budget for increasing the number of delegates.

The next question is one which only others can answer. I know where my heart would take me on this quest. (I have to admit that, in many ways, I have had a certain Quixotic approach to where my life has taken me. Most of the dreams that I’ve had haven’t materialized. And this one may not either. Yet...)

Could *you* visualize yourself as a delegate on a convention floor with thousands and thousands of other Letter Carriers from all over the country? It *is* an experience which is exhilarating and energizing. You have to make your own decision about whether or not you think that it would be something to do and to place some priority on doing what you need to do to be able to be there.

If some of this has made sense, consider this, too. The last part of my framework has to do with sharing some other factors which might come into play to make this dream something which might actually happen.

First: The next NALC National Convention will be held in Anaheim, California. Yes, *that* California. There won’t be any air fare to contend with. We could institute “van-pooling”. This will hold down a major portion of the expenses associated with funding a delegation.

Second: For over twenty years, each delegate has been provided with a room. For the sake of maximizing the number of delegates that we could possibly send to Anaheim, perhaps we can re-institute the notion of two delegates sharing a



President Emeritus Vincent Sombrotto addressed NALC delegates—as he did in many other conventions with wit, wisdom and honesty. In his mid-eighties, the man is still amazing!!!



Attending a convention gives the opportunity to “hang out”. Here, Pam Smith sits with National Business Agent Manny Peralta as he takes a picture of me from inside the trolley. Also on that tour were Diana Chavez, Pam Smith, Jerry Patterson, Darryl and Anita Holderman and John Ortega. You can’t do this kind of thing at home...

Well...Anahiem. Let’s see...oh, yes, Disneyland. And, Angel’s baseball games. And, shopping or hanging out by the pool.. If you can use the week of the convention in conjunction with your “planned” summer vacation, you can use the event as more than just being a delegate. And (just in case you didn’t know this) there is a guest section on the convention floor where family members can join you for all or part of the proceedings to share in the experience. Furthermore, if a delegate wants to bring family members, perhaps the Branch can set up a provision where half of the cost of the room would be paid to the delegate. This actually gives more “bang for the buck” to the Branch.

Fifth: For as long as I have been involved in the NALC, California State Conventions and National Conventions have been held in the same year. There is going to be a change. There will not be a state convention in 2010. It has been rescheduled to 2011.



As a delegate to a National Convention you might see things that you’ve never seen before. This is Fenway Park viewed from the top of the Prudential Building.

That means that monies allocated for the state convention can be adjusted accordingly. Perhaps we can use a portion of money which is usually spent for that function to augment the funds to provide for more delegates to the National Convention? It could happen...

So what’s this got to do with you?

You have two years until the next National Convention. Can you give some priority to being delegate? What do you need to do? Aside from the personal savings decisions that you could make (\$20 a paycheck would mean over \$1000 for family), there are some additional issues to consider.

The Branch 782 By-Laws specify that there are certain criteria which a delegate must meet in order to be a compensated delegate. They are pretty basic.

“Of the delegates from the Bakersfield local area selected to the State or National Convention, the requirements of eligibility for Conventions funds will be: attendance at ten (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the State Convention, and ten (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the National Convention.

Of the delegates selected from the outlying Associate Offices (excess of thirty miles from Bakersfield), the requirements of eligibility for convention funds shall be: attendance at least two (2) meetings (any combination of regular General meetings and/or Quarterly Area Meetings in the twelve months just prior to the State and National Conventions.”

room. (Hey, Darryl and Anita Holderman do it!) I personally know that this can be done. I “roomed” with another delegate at the first State Convention that I attended. And, at the last State convention, Branch President Mike Towery asked me if I would be willing to share a room with a delegate from the Tulare Branch. (He didn’t snore so it worked out okay.)

Third: Most convention delegates use annual leave to cover their attendance. This is one of those things that many members have a problem with. Why should they use their annual leave to do something when they’re not with their family?



Have questions about the Thrift Savings Plan and you?? The people who run the program are there to answer those questions!

*Continued on next page...*

So, for example, if you are a Branch 782 member who lives and works in Tehachapi or Ridgecrest, you have just as much of a chance to be delegate as someone who lives in the city of Bakersfield. You can control your own destiny just by attending the required meetings.

Obviously, the establishment of attendance criteria is to ensure that (with local participation over time) delegates are familiar with the positions that our Branch would take in determining how to vote on the various resolutions and amendments that are presented on the convention floor.



This was kinda neat. I work at Bakersfield's South Station. Here I am at Boston's South Station "T" stop.

that. Especially if they are the dream of somebody else. You have to figure out what it all means to you and if this is something that you want to do.

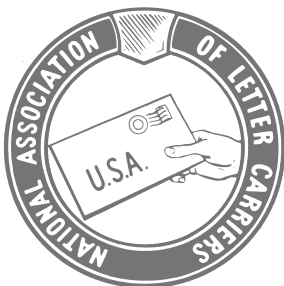
So why is this my dream? It's simple.

Many of us take for granted all of the work rules and protections which frame our work lives. We don't realize that most workers don't have what we have. A national convention is a very real learning experience.

We each have an opportunity to become active in the things which can control our lives. Being a convention delegate is very real education in becoming an activist and developing the skills and tools to survive our lives as Letter Carriers.

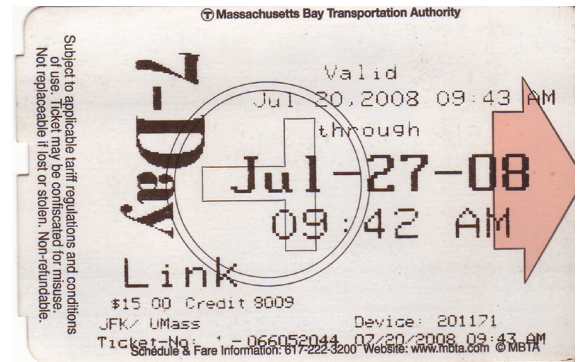
Finally, I can't tell you how affirming it is to meet other Letter Carriers and to develop friendships which—at least for me—can survive the test of time and distance. The delegate experience can involve travelling to other parts of the country. Many times, conventions will take you to cities you have never visited. And, you get the chance to see more than just the airports!

Consider doing the things to become a delegate as an investment in making your life better.



As I close, like other delegates before me, I thank you for allowing me to represent you at a Convention. I have learned a lot. Much of what I have taken from the experience has given me answers to questions which many of you have posed to me. In the future, I look forward to seeing if this dream for Branch 782 will be realized. I know that if a number of you take up the challenge to live this dream of mine, there will be some incredible future results. But, of course, that will be up to you.

My dream is in your hands.



You have to show some "sweat equity" invested.

So what's this got to do with you?

You have to attend meetings to be a delegate.

Also, nominations and elections are held to select delegates. You have to be nominated. You have to be elected. Additionally, elections are conducted by secret ballot and absentee ballots can be requested by members who will be unable to be physically present to vote at the general meeting. You can get all of your co-workers to vote for you even if they don't want to drive to the meeting that night!

This has probably been a lot to digest?

Dreams are like



The springboard from the train to our hotel in South Boston (and yes, the University of Massachusetts and the JFK library were locations you could also get to from here).

BASIL ZUNIGA



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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the publication staff or of the Officers of the Branch.

The information contained in this publication is true and complete to our best knowledge. All recommendations, on equipment and procedures are made without guarantees on the part of the authors or of the organization. Because the quality of equipment, services and methods are beyond our control, the organization and its publication authors disclaim all liability incurred in connection with use of this information.

Information in this publication may not be used for illegal purposes.

We invite all members to contribute articles for publication. Copy, if possible, should be double-spaced (but doesn't have to be) but **MUST** be signed by the contributor.

The Editor retains the right to edit, delete, or reject the article for the good of the Branch (and even this is subject to persuasion).

In the hope that material contained herein may be of benefit to the goals of the National Association of Letter Carriers, permission is hereby granted to other NALC Branches to copy or use material and/or cartoons promulgated in this publication with our best wishes...but remember to cite/give us some credit.

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1980  
2008

*And, there is some other "schtuff" that  
might interest you in this newsletter...*

*Official Notice of  
Nomination and  
Election of Officers*

*Officer Reports*

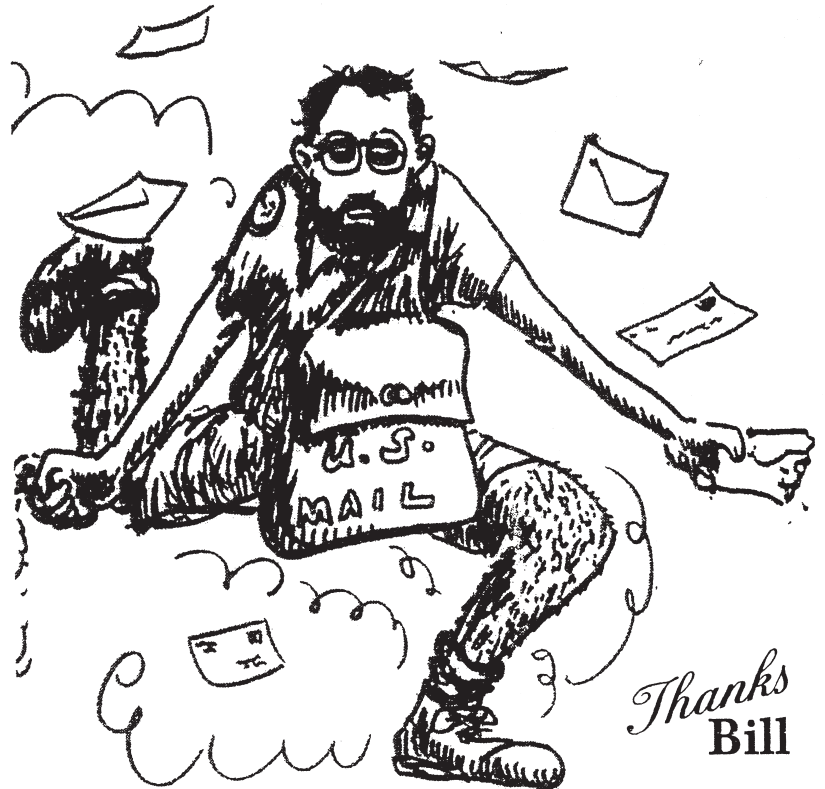
*National Convention  
Delegate Reports*

*Brundage Rocks!!!*

*Hero Nicole Aranda!*

*Lots and lots of pictures!*

*And, of course,  
Fred Acedo's views  
from "Out There"!*



*Thanks  
Bill*

**Bill Curtis  
Retires!!**

*Look for details on pages 18 and 19...*