

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



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CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891

WEB VERSION @WWW.782NALCCOM

JANUARY 2012

If you're "here", you've gotten to the latest "web" version of the *NALC BRANCH 782 E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE*. Thank you for taking a look! For context, our web version augments the printed material published in our regular monthly newsletter. And, we build on it to let you explore some additional insights provided by other Letter Carriers around the country. Obviously, this "digest" reflects selections that caught my interest...

Why do I do this? It is prohibitively expensive to publish our newsletter with a bunch of pages. However, ***THERE IS JUST SO MUCH RELEVANT INFORMATION OUT THERE THAT IS AVAILABLE IN THE MANY NALC NEWSLETTERS FROM ALL OVER THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS!!*** This format provides us a great opportunity for sharing pertinent information with any individual Branch 782 member who wants more.

So...what kinds of things can you find as you electronically "flip" through the pages that weren't in the original print version??? (For perspective, the January 2012 print version had sixteen pages, the web version has 36 pages.)

Page 4 presents a "Salute to the Letter Carrier"; pages 6 & 7 are NALC Legislative Fact Sheets; and, page 8 establishes some context for you to begin to protect your benefits. Page 9 presents a view shared by a self-professed "right-winger conservative" who is also an NALC member in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Do you understand the amount of money that will come out of your pocket if Congress changes our work rules? Check out the article on page 10. The article also shares some information about "Attendance Reviews". The concept of "discipline must be progressive: is something that you should understand. A good summary appears on page 11. Many of you may not have even heard that there was a strike by postal workers. (You might not have even been born when it happened...) You may not understand how that could affect you. Pages 14 and 15 present a well written account that is a good read. What do you know about "Excessing"? Take the quiz on page 22. The answers are on page 23. You may have heard that there have been some changes regarding FMLA and you can find about them are also on page 23. Whether you are close to making some decisions about retirement are are a PTF or junior Regular, two articles on pages 30 and 31 that you might find interesting. An OWCP horror story is featured on page 32. We've all heard about how hard the USPS is trying to downsize this organization. So...is there a group which has actually grown when all others are being slashed? Fresno's Ken Nunn shares a fine analysis on page 33. AND for anybody who is interested, although East Bakersfield no longer exists as a delivery unit, additional pictures are also shared from their rich past on pages 24 through 29

MOST IMPORTANTLY: DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT FRED ACEDO'S CARTOONS! THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!!!

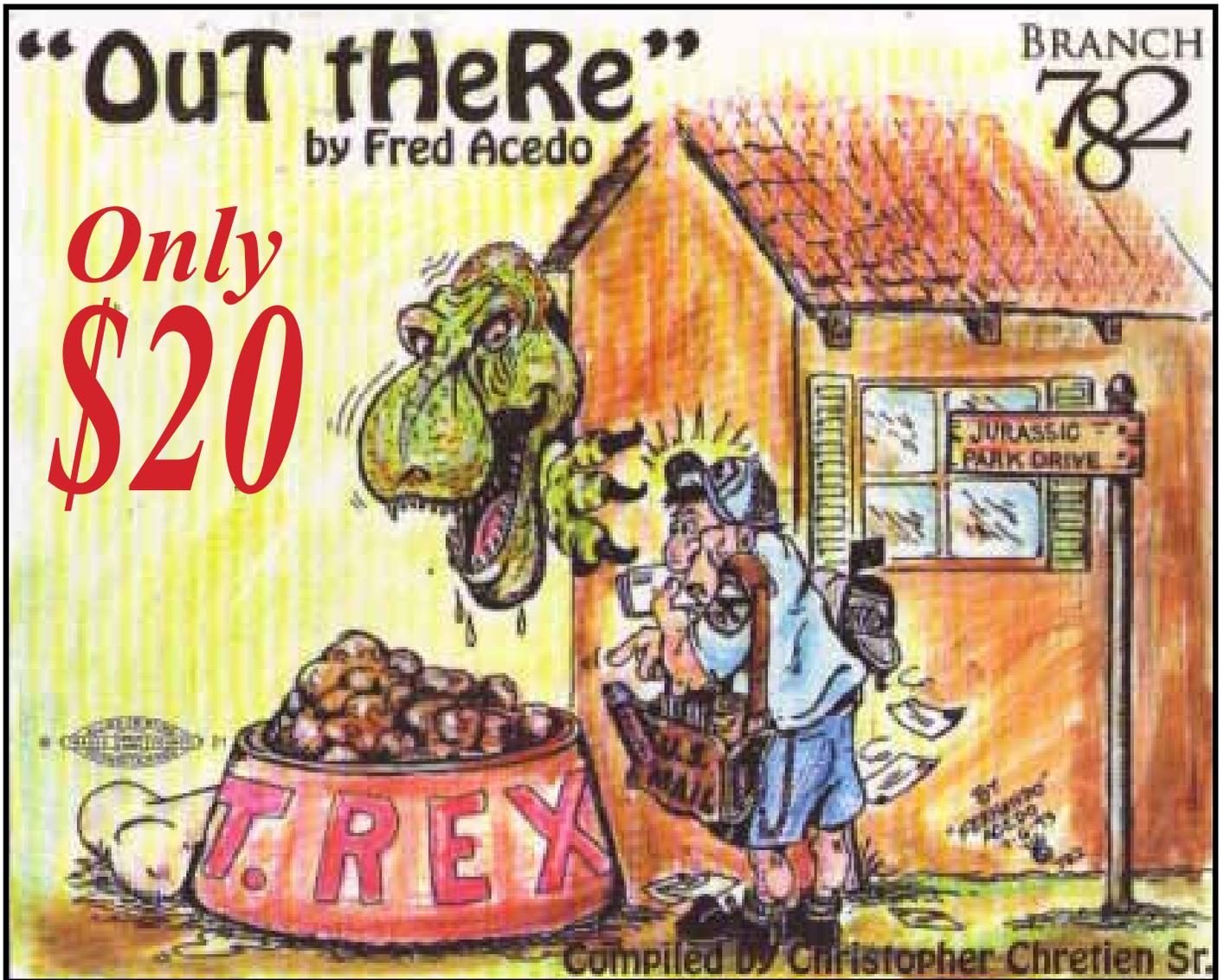
Electronically Yours,
Basil Zuniga, Branch 782 Editor-guy

And now??? An Adversisement for a great, great, GREAT book that you can own...

“Out there” by Fred Acedo

BRANCH
782

Only
\$20



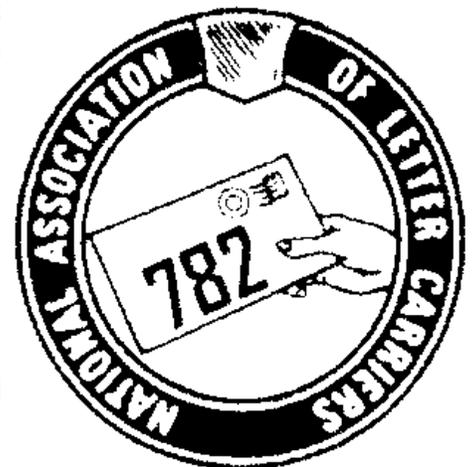
So what is this advertising message about? **THIS** is an MDA fundraiser. We are asking for **YOUR** help!!!!!!

We envisioned that all 2,500 copies of this book would be sold at the national NALC Convention in Anaheim in 2010. Didn't happen. We still have about 1500 copies of this book waiting to be sold before we can make our anticipated MDA donation. And—to add a little twist—a member motion at our general meeting that we had to sell **ALL** of the books before we could make our donation...

The book (about, for and by members of the NALC) chronicles the work of Branch 782 S.A.N.E Fred Acedo through the first nine of his nineteen years producing outstanding glimpses into who we are.

So...you may ask, what can you do? **ORDER A BOOK!!!**

Contact Kim Gerdes at (661) 301-9676; or, try her at the following e-mail address: “krgerdes91@hotmail.com”. **PLEASE** help us out!



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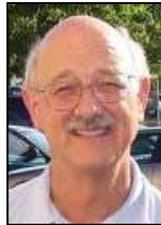
CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891



VOLUME LXXXIII NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2012

at the
Mike:



At the National Rap Session in Las Vegas last October, I asked all members of the National Association of Letter Carriers to collect signatures in support of protecting the future of the United States Postal Service—*AND YOU HAVE DELIVERED!!*

*From active and retired Letter Carriers—from big cities to small towns—**MORE THAN 1 MILLION SIGNATURES WERE COLLECTED, PROCESSED AND SENT TO CONGRESS IN JUST TWELVE WEEKS!!!***

Your dedication, determination and hard work made it possible to reach this goal of 1 million signatures. The voices of Americans from every corner of this country have been heard because of the efforts of the Brothers and Sisters of the NALC.

The message is clear: *Americans support first-rate mail delivery service, six days a week, and they will do everything they can to protect it.*

By reaching this goal, it is our hope that it will help prevent passage of two major bills designed to dismantle the Postal Service that are now pending before Congress—H.R. 2309 and S. 1789.

If it were to become law, H.R. 2309 would end Saturday mail delivery service, radically downsize the USPS and force the closure of thousands of post offices.

In the Senate, S. 1789 fails to repeal the pre-funding requirement, phases out door-to-door delivery and eliminates Saturday delivery by 2014.

While the importance of the USPS to America has been demonstrated to Congress and the White House, our battle is far from over and we must continue to fight for a viable, effective Postal Service. So it is up to us to ensure that Congress does not ignore the voices of these Americans. I'm asking every Letter Carrier to be ready at a moment's notice to take further action on breaking developments to protect the future of the United States Postal Service.

In Solidarity,

Fredric V. Rolando, President
National Association of Letter Carriers

REALLY! Be Proud!!!

Over One Million Signatures! WOW!!!!

This wasn't done by just the national officers...it was an accomplishment by Letter Carriers ALL OVER THE COUNTRY!

Salute to the Letter Carrier

by Steve Halkias, Branch 2008 President

When I first became a Steward for the NALC, I was presented with a book written by William C Doherty, Past President of the National Association of Letter Carriers. The book he wrote was entitled, "Mailman U.S.A." Nowhere have I ever read a better description of Letter Carriers and how the public views them.

Ask the average person what he thinks of when someone mentions the US Postal Service and, in nine cases out of 10, the answer will be: "The Letter Carrier." More than the Postmaster, the postal clerk or even the Postmaster General himself, the man who marches the streets of urban America in uniforms of blue delivering the nation's mail stands as a living symbol and personification of the greatest system of communication ever devised by the human mind.

This is due to many causes. One of these is the fact that the letter carrier is easily identifiable by reason of his uniform and is seen by almost everyone at least once a day, six days a week. What makes a person become a letter carrier? No one in their right mind joins the Postal Service in the expectation of becoming rich. The commercial world offers many jobs that pay higher salaries, offer swifter advancement, equal security, and far less arduous labor. So, why do they do it? I feel certain that each man or woman who joins up must have deep within themselves, even though they may be unconscious of it, the driving urge to be of service to his fellow men, and there are few professions or occupations on earth which can satisfy this compulsion so directly and to the same extent as does the business of moving and delivering the mail.

In my opinion, there is one advantage built into the job of being a letter carrier that is paramount in the mind of anyone who likes and enjoys people and which easily outweighs all the disadvantages: the letter carrier has the daily opportunity of meeting the public on its own terms and in its natural habitat. He has the privilege of observing at close quarters the human drama and of being an active participant in the

ever-changing activities of life. They are privileged to deliver into the homes on their routes eagerly awaited messages from loved ones in distant places, or, even, when those occasions when the call of common humanity demands it, to assist in assuaging the grief of those who receive bad news.

I am quite aware that every general statement is at least partially untrue but, nevertheless, I think it is safe to say that the typical letter carrier is an extrovert and the average postal clerk is an introvert. Of course, there is no special virtue in being either an extrovert or an introvert. All the members of the human family are the way God made them and any society would be unbearable if it consisted entirely of one type or the other, but it is true and natural that an extroverted personality should seek and obtain work that keeps him in constant contact with people, while an introverted personality will normally gravitate to the more technical or the purely clerical type of work. To the average extrovert letter carrier there is nothing quite so exhilarating as the sight of someone on a doorstep along his route eagerly awaiting his arrival with the mail. To such a person, the feeling of being *liked* or *wanted* in the performance of his duties is, in itself, a *raison d'etre*. The life of a letter carrier is endowed with infinite variety. To anyone who genuinely likes mankind, there is nothing dull about the job. Not only are human contacts satisfactorily diversified but, since human nature is gloriously unpredictable, the letter carrier, in the course of his duties, is regularly exposed to generous helpings of the drama of life.

The files of the Postal Service contain innumerable cases of heroism on the part of the nation's letter carriers. The Food Drive, Toys for Tots, the United Way and their contributions to MDA are just a few of the many ways the letter carriers contribute to those less fortunate.

The officers and stewards of Branch 2008 would like to wish each and every one a happy holiday season, and thank each and every one of you for the privilege of serving such a unique group of people: The Letter Carriers.

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

This article is courtesy of *The Suncoast Letter Carriers Update* published in December 1999 by Tarpon Springs, FL NALC Branch 2008...

Johnny on the Spot



Postal reform legislation could move quickly in both chambers when lawmakers return to work later this month.

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which approved a postal reform bill on October 2011, plans

to file its report on H. R. 2309 very soon.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-NV, is eager to move the Senate Chamber's postal reform legislation early in the second session of the 112th Congress.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved its postal bill, "The 21st Century Postal Service Act", in November 2011.

The House officially convenes January 17, 2012 and the Senate returns to work January 23, 2012.

Both the House and Senate bills contain a number of provisions that aim to give USPS greater flexibility and would **MODIFY EMPLOYEES' PAY AND BENEFITS.**

For example, the House legislation H. R. 2309 authored by Republican Congressman Darrel Issa (CA) and co-sponsored by Republican Congressman Dennis Ross (FL)—the only two supporters of this non-bipartisan Bill—establishes the Postal Service Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority.

The Bill would require the USPS to submit to the Authority a financial plan and budget for each year that USPS is in a control period (a period which begins when the USPS has been in default with respect to any loans, bonds, notes, or other form of borrowing for at least 30 days). It grants certain powers to the Authority to act on behalf of USPS during a control period, including the power to renegotiate contracts and to submit recommendations to ensure compliance. It revises provisions relating to the USPS workforce, including: (1) "re-determination" of pay comparability, (2) limitations on contributions to life and health insurance plans, and (3) collective bargaining rights.

The Bill would keep pay in line with the private sector's. (It wasn't too long ago when one of Issa's cronies, Jim Miller, compared the work we do to that of pizza delivery drivers.)

Think about that for a minute...

The Bill would establish a requirement for postal workers to pay at least as much as other federal employees in health and life insurance premiums and would take a substantial amount of money out of our pockets.

We would lose the right to Bargain Collectively. For example, any time the Postal Service defaults on anything, the Authority will have the power to call the NALC back to the bargaining table and dictate to us what our wages will be. "Take it or leave it," simply said.

The Senate Bill, "The 21st Century Postal Service Act" (which is bipartisan), would allow the agency to recoup a \$7 billion overpayment to the Federal Employees Retirement System and to use those funds to offer buyouts and separation incentives to about 100,000 employees.

The Senate legislation also would restructure prefunded retirement health benefits, reducing the payment goal to 80 percent, and require USPS to negotiate with its unions to develop a new employee health care plan. The legislation also allows USPS to switch to five-day delivery after two years if other measures don't produce enough savings.

While the Senate version has promise, it still seems to be the lesser of two evils. I find it weird that both sides of the Senate realize the overpayment of funds to FERS but have not acknowledged the overpayment of funds to CSRS, which is estimated to be between 55 and 75 billion dollars.

With these pieces of legislation moving forward it is most important to have representatives in office that look out for Postal workers needs. We are not "the bad guy" for wanting a decent living wage; for wanting health benefits in case of illness or injury; or for wanting a retirement pension when we are ready to hang up our satchel.

COLCPE is the way to do our part to insure that we have our voice heard on Capitol Hill. The monies collected are distributed to members of both political parties, not just one side of the aisle.

While our very own Representative, Congressman Kevin McCarthy, has turned a deaf ear to our pleas for his support, he still is just one vote.

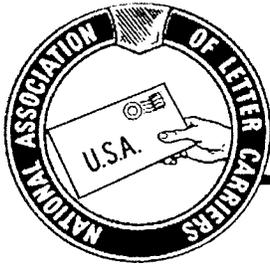
The money you contribute to COLCPE can be used to help another candidate who has pledged their support for our concerns.

Please take a little time and give it some thought. \$5 a payday is a small price to pay but goes a long way when many contribute.

Remember, we gathered over one million signatures in support...

Respectfully,

JOHN ORTEGA
Vice-President Branch 782



NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — www.nalc.org © NALC

April 7, 2011

Support H.R. 1351: United States Postal Service's Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011

On April 5, 2011, Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) introduced H.R. 1351, the United States Postal Service's Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011.

Lynch, the ranking member of the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, was the first member of Congress to author legislation last Congress to address a decades-old accounting error that led the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to overcharge the Postal Service by billions of dollars for payments into the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Lynch's bill once again takes a big step toward making sure the Postal Service is treated in a fair and equitable manner, allowing it to overcome the very difficult financial challenges it currently faces. In addition to addressing the CSRS overcharge, H.R. 1351 also deals with the more recent finding regarding another overcharge to the USPS related to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Even so, H.R. 1351 only addresses the CSRS and FERS overcharges and does not repeal the onerous, legally mandated, annual pre-funding payments into the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund (PSRHBF). (For a complete background on these additional financial challenges, please see the NALC Fact Sheet entitled *Save the Postal Service: Demand Fairness in USPS Pension and Retiree Health Funding.*)

H.R. 1351 takes the necessary first steps toward ensuring a financially sound future for the United States Postal Service. The bill was drafted with three major components, taking into consideration the recent Segal Company Report issued by the Postal Regulatory Commission:

1. It calls on the OPM to recalculate the USPS surplus in the Civil Service Retirement System within six months of enactment, using a methodology that fairly allocates the cost of pensions between the Post Office Department and the U.S. Postal Service as proposed by the Segal Report.

2. Then, once the accurate "postal surplus" is determined by the OPM, the agency would have 15 days to transfer the surplus to the PSRHBF.

3. Direct the OPM to permit the USPS to use most of its \$6.9 billion surplus in the FERS system to satisfy two obligations in FY 2011: a \$5.5 billion payment due to the PSRHBF, and a \$1.2 billion estimated payment to the Department of Labor for Federal Employees Compensation Act (workers comp.) expenses. Any remaining funds would be used to reduce the Postal Service's normal cost-percentage for FERS in future years.

H.R. 1351 does not address the legally mandated pre-funding payments into the PSRHBF beyond the FY2011 payment, which costs the USPS \$5.5 billion annually. Rather, it simply fixes the massive over-funding to the postal CSRS and FERS accounts. Additional legislation would be necessary to repeal the future scheduled pre-funding payments to the PSRHBF.

Additionally, the date of the transfer for the overcharge is less important than the acknowledgment by Congress and the OPM that the USPS has sufficient assets to cover all its retirement obligations—for both pensions and health benefits. Since the PSRHBF already has more than \$42 billion in it, and since the surplus transfer from the CSRS pension fund would likely leave the PSRHBF fully funded, passage of H.R. 1351 makes an irrefutable case for the repeal of the pre-funding payments called for by current law.

The Lynch bill would transfer surplus CSRS and FERS assets paid for by ratepayer and employee contributions—not taxpayer funds—to the Postal Service's retirement health fund, and it would have absolutely no effect on any current or future federal retiree's annuity.

The NALC supports swift passage of H.R. 1351.



NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

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March 11, 2011

Eliminating Saturday delivery is not the answer; Support H.Res. 137

The U.S. Postal Service faces the worst crisis in its history.

It expects to lose \$6.4 billion in 2011. Although the collapse of the housing and financial sectors in late 2008 is responsible for the largest decline in mail volume since the Great Depression in the 1930s, the main cause of the financial crisis is the decision advanced by the Bush administration in the postal reform law of 2006 to require the USPS to pre-fund its **future** retiree health benefits, a 75-year liability, in just 10 years. The cost of this unaffordable annual pre-funding payment accounts for most of the projected losses each year. The annual cost will rise to \$5.8 billion by 2016. While the NALC is working with postal management to address the crisis with the Joint Alternate Route Adjustment Process, Congress must take action to relieve this pre-funding burden to preserve affordable, universal service.

Additionally, two independent studies have been conducted that show the USPS has been overcharged by as much as \$75 billion in payments to its Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) fund. These overpayments could easily satisfy any unfunded liability to the Postal Service's future retiree health benefits. (Please see *NALC Fact Sheet: Save the Postal Service: Demand Fairness in USPS Pension and Retiree Health Funding.*)

Postal management's proposal to deal with the crisis—eliminating Saturday mail delivery—is not a sensible solution to the USPS's financial crisis.

The Postal Service estimates that by eliminating one-sixth of its delivery service, it can cut operating expenses by \$3.1 billion or 5 percent—not the 16.6 percent you might expect. The model it used to estimate potential savings is based on many unproven assumptions and did not specifically study the elimination of Saturday delivery, the day most Americans are home to receive packages.

To date, no study has been conducted to estimate how a reduction in delivery days would affect mail volume and delivery costs in the remaining five days or how different types of mailers would be affected.

A study conducted on behalf of the Postal Regulatory Commission suggests that total cost savings by eliminating one day of delivery could be as low as \$1.9 billion, or just 2.5 percent of total postal expenses.

The Postal Service is rushing to judgment.

In letters to employee groups dated June 11, 2009, USPS management requested input on a study of the feasibility of weekday-only delivery with replies due back within one week. A month later, it informed its craft unions that it planned to finish its review in just three weeks. The Service appeared to be recycling an old IBM study that it had used for the PRC's universal service investigation. A more thoughtful and serious study is needed.

The proposed reduction in delivery services would be the most radical change to postal operations in the 230-plus year history of the U.S. Mail.

No such policy decision should be made after just a few weeks of consideration, much less without a comprehensive study of its effects.

Six-day delivery makes the Postal Service unique.

One of the defining characteristics of the U.S. Postal Service is its policy of nationwide, uniform pricing with six-day delivery. Competitors either don't deliver or charge high premiums for Saturday delivery, while the USPS provides affordable universal service as mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

American businesses value six-day delivery.

Business in the United States is conducted six days—and, in many sectors, *seven* days—per week. Small and large businesses alike, from individual entrepreneurs to large-scale financial firms, rely on the delivery of the mail six days per week to operate successfully. Saturday delivery is especially important to growing companies like eBay, Netflix and CVS/Caremark, and has long been vital for delivery of news magazines. The elimination of Saturday delivery will make the USPS less valuable to business and accelerate electronic substitution.

Information on these two pages is presented by NALC Branch 782 Legislative Liaison Diana Herrera.

Protect MY benefits? YES!!!

Problems with your union?

I have been a government employee for close to twenty years and steward for over half that time. I've recognized that we work for an employer that is looking to get rid of you as fast as they hired you, especially if you're not making "the numbers." We have the negotiated right to earned sick leave, paid annual leave and holidays, clothing allowances, health benefit plans and cost of living adjustments. We are one of the last businesses, public or private, that still has a cost of living allowance factored into our salaries.

All of these benefits, over many decades, have come with a price. I don't mean the union dues you pay. I'm talking about the sacrifice that our union brothers and sisters made in years past. These brave men and women literally placed their jobs on the line when they went out on strike in 1970. If not for their courage and cohesiveness as a whole, we may have never gained the benefits that we take for granted today. It would be unrealistic to think that management, who hovers over you for "undertime," and then insults you when you tell them that you won't be able to make it because you are not meeting their unrealistic "numbers", would give us the benefits listed above without the union negotiating to protect them. Don't blame the union; you are the union.

What would life be without union protection?

Imagine how hard this job would be if we were not unionized. Most letter carriers have experienced that management has not been, and will not be, honest with them. The most recent lie is that if the post office were a private business that it would be filing for bankruptcy. If this was a fact, it would be the richest company ever to file for bankruptcy. The truth is that if the post office was a private business, they would not be required to pay 5.5 billion dollars to fund future retirees' health benefits for seventy-five years in a ten year time frame. When Congress mandated this payment schedule in 2006, they essentially required the Postal Service to fund future health benefits for employees that have not even been born yet. The Post Office is not hiring many new employees, and given the drop in mail volume, the implementation of FSS and Article 12 excessing, it doesn't appear that the Service plans to hire many new employees any time soon.

The Postal Services' plan is to attempt to lay off 120,000 employees by 2015. This plan is bad for the economy, which already has a grossly high unemployment rate, as it would eliminate 120,000 middle class jobs, most of which are protected by the contract's no-layoff after 6 years clause. This topic is currently in contract negotiations. The Service also wants to close nearly 3700 "non-profitable/ low volume" offices, many of which are in poor and rural areas of the country. These cuts and closures are unnecessary, as the retirement and future health benefit plans that are overfunded with a surplus that is estimated to be between 50-75 billion dollars would cover the mandated annual 5.5 billion dollar obligation for a long time. Without this payment the Postal Service would have actually shown a profit from 2007 through 2010, even in the recession.

Involvement is necessary and more important than ever. If you want things to change, then you, the members, have to bring that about. There are several ways to do this. Participate and vote in elections. If you would like something added or changed to the contract, submit your proposal to the branch to be reviewed and potentially submitted as a national bargaining position. If you would like something added or changed locally to your LMOU or the by-laws, make your submissions to the proper committees to have your ideas examined, discussed and potentially adopted. If you are unaware of how to do any of this, a simple call to the union hall is all it takes. Be prepared to defend your position and discuss it with fellow carriers to gauge whether or not there is support for the issue and most importantly, show up at union meetings to discuss, debate and vote on any of these matters. One easy way to have an immediate impact on change is to become a steward. Educate yourself and be willing to defend your installation. You will garner the respect of your fellow carriers. When this happens the "group" tends to stand together, not as individuals, making it much tougher for management to harass, intimidate and discipline carriers. Watch over each other. Know your job and educate yourself on the proper manner of performing your work. Utilize the training classes the branch offers, whether that's training for the job or training for the stewards. None of us know everything and the more people that can collaborate on ideas to help protect, defend and further letter carrier causes, the better. With the current attacks from the Postal Service and Congress, is there a better time to get involved?

There are a number of things that the union works daily to demonstrate. The next time you hear someone speaking unfavorably about the union, remind them of what belonging to one gets them, and where we may be if we weren't unionized. If you don't like specific things or would like things changed the only answer to that question is to become involved in numbers. I will end this article with this:

This company cannot exist without the letter carriers daily efforts, union leadership cannot work without member support and don't let management divide and conquer.

- Dave Grosskopf

Article courtesy of the Buffalo, NY Branch 3 Buzz
published in January 2012

5 - DAY
Is still the
WRONG WAY

Don't forget to check out the web version of this newsletter! More is better... Go to our site at WWW.782NALC.COM and give some feedback.

COLCPE Protects My Rights, Too!!!

by Michael Hotovy
Green Bay Branch 619

People who know me are quite aware that I am a bit of an anomaly politically. I am a conservative right winger and agree with the Tea Party on a topic or two. Yet, I am an active NALC member, strongly support the concepts of collective bargaining and workers' rights (to choose to collectively bargain is a free market decision too), and am a COLCPE contributor. You may wonder why, so let me give you a peek at how I look at the Postal Service's current problems. As I see it, the two major challenges to letter carriers and the NALC are the size of our national debt and declining mail volume from a private sector mired in a deep recession.

Government plays a part, both good and bad, in both these problems. Our national debt now hovers near \$14 trillion. Our annual national budget stands at \$3.7 trillion annually; yet as a nation we collect only \$2 trillion in tax revenues. The remainder of the money is borrowed from foreign investors, or printed—a move that devalues the currency and drives up inflation (just check food, gas and utility prices). A serious discussion is now happening at the national level regarding how much government we can afford and how to fund it.

How does that affect us? Simple. Right now, the government is desperate for money to keep the national ship afloat. When the USPS and NALC go to Capital Hill to ask for financial relief from overpayment into the prefunding of retirees, know that any relief granted is a loss on the federal balance sheet at a time when virtually no losses can be tolerated. The reality is that Congress has needed to tap the finances of the USPS for decades; so, should any relief be offered, expect it to come with a high price tag.

That is why Senator Tom Carper' (D-DE) new version of the Postal Operations Sustainment and Transformation Act mirrors Republican proposals that would fairly resolve the pension and retiree health prefunding burdens that have damaged the USPS's finances in recent years but include the elimination of six-day delivery and the addition of pro-management changes to the law governing collective bargaining disputes. Understandably, those are simply anti-worker provisions the NALC cannot support. But, let's not kid ourselves: it is proposed legislation that has support from both parties.

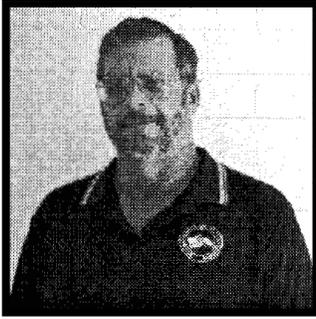
To pile on to our problems, we also face declining mail volume. While I do acknowledge the impact of new technology on volume, I am of the opinion that much of the financial pressure we are currently enduring will lift when the economy recovers; and it will. For as all conservatives know, there are always people out there who want to make money; and letter carriers still play a major role in our nation's commerce. The fact remains that the USPS is a vital cog in disseminating the business message and fulfillment of sales. In a healthy economy, we will prosper.

Now, it is certainly not my intention in the article to start a political fight and argue the proper size and role of government in the private sector, but I am certainly advocating that we all do our due diligence in researching our political candidates and support those who not only support our positions as union members, but also have the business acumen to return the private sector to health. Face it, even the government doesn't use the Postal Service much anymore (direct deposit, e-filing of taxes, web access to manage nearly all government-related accounts, etc.) Our future survival is tied to the health of the private sector.

In the end, I was inspired to write this column by a question from a fellow conservative, "Why do you give to COLCPE when much of the money you donate often goes to candidates and political parties you don't support?" It's a valid question and one that deserves an answer. I give to COLCPE not because it supports my candidates, but because it supports the issues vital to my job, co-workers, union and employer. In times as serious as these, I am encouraged to see quotes from President Rolando and the NALC expressing willingness to work with members from both parties, including Senators Carper and Collins, to resolve our issues.

If these are not reasons enough for you to support COLCPE, remember that, at the very least, our jobs are not only affected by postal management, but by the actions of Congress as well. The NALC will be representing you and your job in our next contract negotiations. I don't know about you, but I want the people negotiating my future paychecks to do so from as strong a position as possible, not only at the table with postal management but in the halls of Congress as well.

This article is courtesy of the NALC Branch 2 *Pioneer* published in December 2011. (Editor-guy comment: Complex issues don't have simple solutions. We each have commitment to values we hold dear. YOUR vote for President will directly determine your future. That IS a fact. I don't know Michael Hotovy, but I appreciate the perspective that he brings to the our politically challenging reality.)



**EXECUTIVE
VICE PRESIDENT'S
REPORT
Phillip Dufek**

Carriers to Pay More Out of Pocket

If we are not successful in educating the public, it WILL COST EACH OF US.

Recently some carriers obtained signatures on petitions to Save Saturday Delivery. Perhaps they realized the changes proposed by the USPS to reduce operating costs will translate into fewer employees. At a recent station meeting, more than one carrier came face to face with the reality that if they are retirement eligible (based SOLELY upon their age) and the Postal Service gets its way, they probably would be unemployed. Everyone present agreed that was discrimination until it was realized that if Congress passed it, there's NOTHING anyone could do about it. It then became deafly silent.

For instance, today many are still unaware that ending Saturday Delivery reduces service by 17% (80,000 jobs within the USPS alone) yet, only results in a 2% savings. (No one has calculated the number of lost jobs in the private sector.) The USPS also wants to take over management of Health Insurance to reduce costs. Transitional Employees pay the monthly premiums for their Health Insurance or go without. Think co-pays are high now? Multiply the number of employees by the amount they could save by having everyone pay more for their health care- BIG SAVINGS.

The USPS does an incredible job in every year delivering billions of pieces of mail (letters, magazines, parcels, sprs and fliers) cheaper than anywhere else in the world. However; they also claim they can more cheaply manage retirement. Presently, Postal Management ALREADY is obligated to manage WITHOUT violating our contract. Yet, solely because of mismanagement, the USPS pays ODL (Penalty Overtime for not working) and award non-ODL Admin Leave. *Convince me they are fiscally competent to manage retirement investment even though unable to be contractually compliant....*

Every carrier, retiree and annuitant is needed in obtaining public support through education. A little known fact- **In the last 30 years NOT ONE DIME of taxpayer funds has gone to support the US Postal Service!** All our revenue has been derived from postage. Yet, **OVER 99% of the public ISN'T AWARE OF THIS.** Many believe we are federally funded. Self promoters like Rep Darrel Issa (2309) prey upon this type

of ignorance by promoting we need a Gov't bailout. If the changes the USPS wants Congress to pass become reality; the COST to EVERY employee, retiree, annuitant and the public will be considerable. If you've done nothing thus far, it's past time to become involved. If you've been active, please continue because it's our future are at stake.

ATTENDANCE REVIEWS

More often than not during a fact finding, the supervisor says something to the effect of: "on July 6th, you were given an attendance review....," and the carrier has no recollection of it. There are several things worth remembering.

First, because the review involves personal information (your absence) it probably should take place in private, between you and the supervisor, like a Discussion. It's no other craft employee's business that or why you were out the day before your SDO yesterday. If management has a need to know or wants to inquire about it, they should arrange time for that. Simply passing you by in the morning when you're casing your route and they've asked you how you're going to be is not the time nor the place to have an Attendance Review.

Secondly, since this is about unwanted behavior, it should probably involve more than one incident. A Basic Principle of Discipline is that Management has an obligation to let the employee know they're not meeting expectations. One absence in and of itself probably does not warrant an Attendance Review unless someone religiously takes the day off after every Holiday in which case you could be considered to be setting a pattern.

Third, you should be provided an opportunity to demonstrate improvement*. You can't correct an unwanted behavior (eg Unacceptable Attendance) unless you first become aware of it. That's where the Attendance "Review" comes in. This also means it's more often than not inappropriate for management to later consider the absences before the Attendance Review in subsequent discipline. After all, how could you correct what you didn't know was unacceptable? However, once being made aware of the issue, management presumes the employee has been made aware of the unwanted behavior and if not corrected, might follow-up later absences with a Fact Finding and then consider the appropriateness of disciplinary action.

**An "Attendance Review" may not be required when the employee already has live Discipline on file for Attendance.*

If you have questions, ask to see your steward. Normally, Management should provide you an opportunity to meet with your steward within 2 hours of your request. While circumstances sometimes might not permit this, time to consult with your steward should not normally extend beyond the tour in which the request was made. (M-00458)

This excellent article is courtesy of *The Buzz* published in December 2011 by Buffalo, New York NALC Branch 3



LARRY SHEPHERD

Formal A Representative A.O.

Joe Downs, who is one of our best union stewards in the branch, recently sent up a grievance appeal for a carrier who received discipline charged in part for not curbing the wheels of his postal vehicle while it was parked and he was working mail out of the back of the vehicle. The grievant was issued a 7 Day Suspension with no active discipline in their file. The supervisor requested a 7 Day Suspension as per the "guideline set from KYANA District for a safety infraction."

This is in direct violation of the National Agreement.

M-01289 Step 4 June 18, 1997, D94N-4D-C 97027016

The parties agree that management has the right to articulate guidelines to its employees regarding their responsibility concerning issues relating to safety. However, the parties also mutually agree that local accident policies, guidelines, or procedures may not be inconsistent or in conflict with the National Agreement. Discipline imposed for cited safety rule violations must meet the "just cause" provisions of Article 16 of the National Agreement.

One of the basic tenants of "Just Cause" is that discipline must be "progressive".

JCAM 16-2

Corrective Rather than Punitive

The requirement that discipline be "corrective" rather than "Punitive" is an essential element of the "just cause" principle. In short, it means that for most offenses management most issue discipline in a "progressive" fashion, issuing lesser discipline (e.g., a letter of warning) for a first offense and a pattern of increasingly severe discipline for succeeding offenses (e.g., short suspension, long suspension, discharge). The basis of this principle of "corrective" or "progressive"

discipline is that it is issued for the purpose of correcting or improving employee behavior and not as punishment or retribution.

- If other carriers in your station have only received a job discussion or Letter of Warning for a similar safety infraction be sure to include their statements and discipline in the case file as this is a blatant form of Disparate Treatment and in direct violation of the "Just Cause" provisions of Article 16 of the National Agreement.

JCAM 16-2

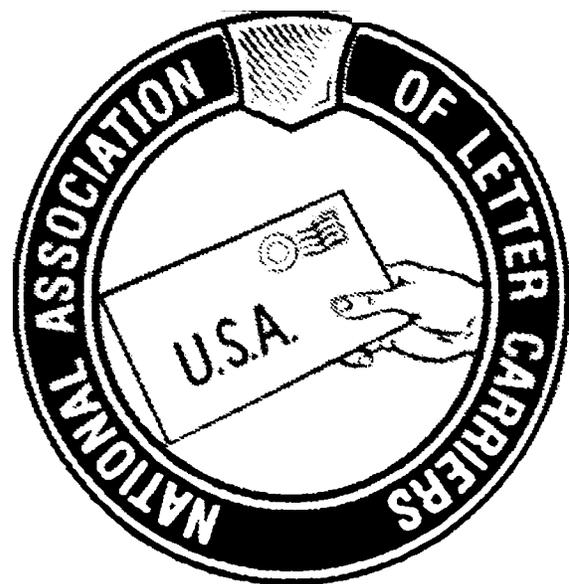
- **Is the rule consistently and equitable enforced?**

A rule must be applied fairly and without discrimination. Consistent and equitable enforcement is a critical factor.

- **Was the severity of the discipline reasonably related to the infraction itself and in line with that usually administered, as well as to the seriousness of the employee's past record?**

The following is an example of what arbitrators may consider an inequitable discipline: If an installation consistently issues five-day suspensions for a particular offense, it would be extremely difficult to justify why an employee with a past record similar to that of other disciplined employees was issued a thirty-day suspension for the same offense.

I would like to take this time to wish my family, new grand-baby and all members of Branch 14 a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



This article is courtesy of *The Branch 14 Newsletter* published in December 2011 by Louisville, Kentucky NALC Branch 14

Minutes of the December 2011 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m., on the 20th day of December, 2011 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, Darryl Holderman. All members of the Executive Board were present except Financial Secretary, Anita Holderman. The stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Webmaster, Rick Plummer; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes; Asst. Recording Secretary, Mable Bullis and Legislative Rep., Diana Herrera. The minutes of the November 22, 2011 meeting were read by Asst. Recording Secretary, Mabel Bullis and were accepted with no additions or corrections.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega reported that she was only \$104.00 over budget for the picnic. She said that was "Amazing!" Basil Zuniga reported that Dole Ct. folded last month, so next month will be Stockdale. He reported that the web version has been posted and thanked Rick Plummer for all his work. Mabel Bullis reported that two books were sold this month, 1545 remaining.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that the Contract Negotiations were extended to January 20, 2012. He thanked Mark Ramirez for taking care of getting the turkey for the potluck; he negotiated the price down from \$114.00 to \$93.00. Mike reported that Postmaster, Jim Bouillard was supposed to attend tonight's meeting, but must have been busy. He said that "JB" was a postmaster with integrity; he believed in having a union and was actively involved in the community. The plant manager David Morrison will be acting postmaster.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman will report next month.

*Don't forget to check out the web version of this newsletter!
More is better... Go to our site
at
WWW.782NALC.COM*

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$64,476.24
Dues and Income	\$11,081.08
Interest Income	\$ 8.20
Total Balance	\$75,565.52
Expenses	\$11,421.45
Ending Balance	\$64,144.07

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Norma Hamer.

The Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Daniel Medina if he had been present.

Teresa and Andrew Garcia wanted to thank the carriers at South Station. When the carriers at South heard that the Garcia family's home had been robbed, and their Christmas presents taken, they took up a collection for them.

There were 38 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

OUT THERE



NON-MEMBER LIST DECEMBER 2011

AVENAL (93203)
100% UNION!!!

ARVIN (93209)
100% UNION!!!

DELANO (93215)
L. A. Campos
C. V. Quebral

LAMONT (93241)
100% UNION!!!

McFARLAND (93250)
100% UNION!!!

SHAFTER (93263)
L. M. New
M. D. Voights

TAFT (93268)
M. R. Marin
B. W. Krier
K. J. Hughes

WASCO (93280)
100% UNION!!!

DOWNTOWN (93301)
D. Pearce
J. Cruz

EAST BAKERSFIELD (93305)
G. S. Saran

HILLCREST (93306)
A. White

BRUNDAGE (93307)
D. Kinglee

DOLE COURT (93308/12)
S. Hancock
D. Morris

STOCKDALE (93309)
J. Oh
P. A. Medrano
P. M. Russell

CAMINO MEDIA (93311/13)
100% UNION!!!

MOJAVE (93501)
100% UNION!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY (93504)
100% UNION!!!

BORON (93516)
100% UNION!!!

EDWARDS AFB (93526)
100% UNION!!!

TEHACHAPI (93561)
100% UNION!!!

TRONA (93562)
100% UNION!!!

RIDGECREST (93555)
B. J. Leroy
L. M. Montano
H. G. Blanco
S. R. Pierce

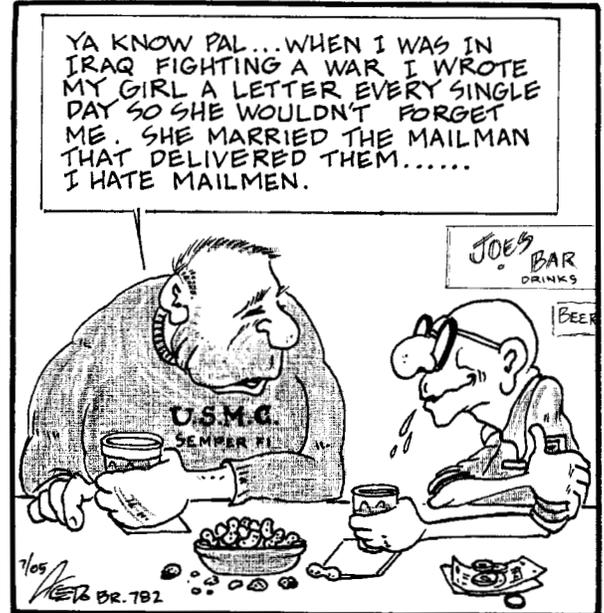
We are an "Open Shop". **MEMBERSHIP IS VOLUNTARY.**
369 Letter Carriers are in the complement assigned to cities represented by
our Branch. **ONLY 21 ARE NON-MEMBERS.** We are 94.3% organized!

"OUT THERE"

OUT THERE



OUT THERE



HAVE AN IDEA FOR FRED????*

FRED ACEDO
BR. 782 S.A.N.E.
P.O. BOX 6532
BAKERSFIELD, CA
93386-6532

*...YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MIGHT GET...

Strike!!

Susan Lewis, Vice President

Back in high school, history was my least favorite subject. It was a blur of meaningless dates and battles, taught by old men, one with a raging dandruff problem, and another who I suspect was an alcoholic who spent most of the class, silent, with his head in his hands, while we students watched filmstrips. To this day, a high school history book can treat my insomnia faster and more effectively than warm milk, a hot bath or even Ambien.



I went to my first Branch 3 Old Timers' Night six months after I started working at the post office. NALC President Vincent Sombrotto was the guest speaker and he talked about how the fifty-year members that were being honored that night were a part of the Postal Strike of 1970. President McLennan talked about it too and then the retirees. It may have happened more than 25 years earlier but it was news to me. There was a Postal strike in 1970? I was nine years old. Whatever. The following year at Old Timers' Night, the carriers at my table turned the strike into a drinking game. Each time the word "strike" was said or "1970", we'd all drink. It was a tipsy night. More, meaningless, boring history... except that it's not. It's not meaningless and it's not boring. What led up to the strike and the effect of the strike are directly connected to our jobs today.

Local letter carrier organizations have existed since the 1860s but the National Association of Letter Carriers wasn't formed until 1889. Detroit (Branch 1), Milwaukee (Branch 2) and Buffalo, Branch 3, were the charter members of the newly formed association. Some bitterness still exists that we were not designated as Branch 2 but, we're "wide-right", "no-goal" Buffalo; we're used to it.

One of the first big struggles faced by the NALC was the 8 hour work day. The Post Office department interpreted the 1868 eight-hour day law to mean 8 hours a day, seven days a week; not a forty but a fifty-six hour workweek. Does it shock anyone that postal management could so utterly and completely defy law and logic to see things from that perspective? The NALC sued and, four years later, won three and a half million dollars to settle their overtime dispute. It's easy to draw a straight line from the Post Office Department's flagrant violation of that law to the Postal Service's violation of our contract when, a few years back, they hired huge numbers of casuals in lieu of regular employees, and later, their brilliant National Reassessment Program, where they put limited duty carriers out of work. The line followed by the NALC is also simple to follow. Branch 3 won millions in the casual grievance and most, if not all, of our NRP cases resulted in back pay and reinstatement.

While the NALC has been around for more than 120 years, it wasn't until 1962 that a Kennedy Executive Order gave the NALC the right to represent carriers in grievances and contract negotiations. But, even then, wages, hours and benefits were not among our bargaining rights. Pay raises could only be gained by congressional approval and, more often than not,

presidential vetoes blocked increases. By the late 1960s, letter carrier pay lagged well behind the national average. In some cases, carriers were eligible for welfare, food stamps and Medicare. Many Branch 3 members held second jobs in order to feed their families and make ends meet. Adding insult to injury, overtime restrictions and the wholesale hiring of temporary employees caused an enormous deterioration in service. Millions of pieces of mail piled up, undelivered, 10 million in Chicago alone.

President Nixon, who had pledged support for postal workers, not only proposed a wage increase that fell short of inflation rates, he threw his support behind privatizing the post office into a "self-supporting postal corporation". It was almost too much for letter carriers to bear.

The winter of 1969 was a tough one in Buffalo, cold and snowy. Ten feet of snow fell between December and March. January of 1970 had an average temperature of 17 degrees and 38 inches of snow fell that month. February wasn't a whole lot better. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the cost of living continued to rise at the fastest pace in twenty years. Food and housing prices were up by more than 7% from the previous year. Clothing prices were up nearly 5%. Letter carrier pay did not come close to keeping up with inflation; carriers were losing rather than gaining ground. Newly hired carriers were making \$6176 per year and only after 21 years did they reach top pay of \$8442.

On March 17, 1970, Branch 36, New York, voted to strike. In response, Branch 3 called a special meeting to consider their options. By all accounts it was a well-attended, boisterous meeting. Like the men in New York, Buffalo carriers were fed up with getting the congressional and presidential run-around. They were working under harsh weather conditions combined with an increasingly contentious labor/management atmosphere, and for a paycheck that barely kept their heads above water. Something had to give. By a vote of 673 to 186, the members of our branch agreed to join the fight. A cheer went up in Carpenter's Hall when the strike vote was announced.

Branch 3 President John (Jack) McGuire told the full time carriers to dress in civilian attire and "act like the gentlemen that letter carriers are" on the picket line. PTFs, or subs as they were referred to then, reported each morning to the main post office on William Street to get their daily assignments. Joining the strikers when they had not yet been hired as full time carriers was a big risk but most joined anyway; if their brothers were willing to risk their livelihoods, so would they. In addition to the letter carriers, an additional 2,700 clerks, mailhandlers, maintenance workers and, surprisingly, supervisors refused to cross the picket lines.

On Friday March 20, the morning paper, The Courier Express, ran the front page headline, "Mailmen Here Join Tie-up, Strike Spreads in East, Midwest". The 1300 members of

Mailmen Picket Here

Branch 3 had walked off the job and onto picket lines. Later that same day, the strike was also front page news in The Buffalo Evening News. Their headline read, "Postal Shutdown Complete in Area, Strike Brings Embargo on All Mail Within 50-mile Radius of City." Buffalo postmaster Myron Blakeney announced that there would be no mail accepted for delivery in the Buffalo area; the postal service was shut down. Buffalo normally handled between 700,000 and 750,000 pieces of first class mail each day and that mail backed up on trucks and in post offices throughout the city. Many of the carriers had removed their case labels before walking off the job making it nearly impossible for anyone else to move the mail. In all, the William Street post office and 24 offices in the city and suburbs, including Lackawanna, Blasdell, West Seneca and Cheektowaga were affected. The Associate Offices in the area, not yet a part of Branch 3, had not voted to strike but were halted nonetheless since no mail was moving out of the main office. Approximately 1 million patrons throughout the area had their mail delivery stopped.

The PO attempted to get a court injunction. The maximum penalty for the illegal strike was a \$1000 fine, one year in prison or both but even a local PO spokesman told The News, "You can't jail thousands of workers." But, the threat remained and strikers noticed that from both inside and outside of the post offices they were being watched. At one post office, a big car pulled up, the passenger window went down and a manager with a Super 8 movie camera filmed the men on the picket line; a not-so-subtle way of showing the union members that the post office had proof of who they were.

Branch president McGuire flew to Washington DC to meet with the branch presidents of the 300 largest cities. President Nixon issued a statement that there would be no bargaining with letter carriers until they returned to work, the strike was, in his words, having a "devastating effect on the national economy." A temporary compromise was reached in DC and the carriers of our branch returned to work a few days later.

The almost immediate result of the strike was a 6% pay increase in April of 1970, retroactive to December 1969. Next, in August, carriers got an additional 8% increase, retroactive to April. By November the wage scale was compressed from 21 years to eight years; carriers would reach the top pay scale 13 years sooner. In July of 1971, with the first collective bargaining agreement, the Post Office Department was replaced by the United States Postal Service, carriers received a \$1250 annual increase, a cost of living adjustment capped at \$160, a \$300 lump sum payment and a no-layoff clause was put into effect for the length of the contract. The strike had achieved many of the NALC's objectives.

Imagine what our jobs would be like if not for the strike. Imagine if our pay and benefits were still at the mercy of Congress. There are currently more than a handful of postal reform resolutions bouncing around in committees but the only postal action congress has taken is to name a few post offices. While they sit on their hands, we continue to be paid a living wage. Imagine how your family would be living if you had to hold a second job in order to pay the mortgage and keep your children fed and clothed. Imagine what working conditions would be like without our contract, without seniority rights, without the representational rights of the union. Imagine doing this physically demanding job and being paid the equivalent of the kid flipping burgers at McDonalds.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the members of our branch and around the country who wrote our history with their actions in 1970. And we owe them the honor of keeping that history alive in our own actions. The things we do as a union today will affect those who follow us; we need to deal with today's issues with an eye for the future of the postal service and the men and women who will deliver the mail long after our retirement.

~ With eternal gratitude, Susan Lewis

(I offer many thanks to the retirees who took the time to share their stories with me, at the office, over the phone and at the general membership meeting. It was my great pleasure to spend time with you all. Your dedication to the NALC, past and present, is an inspiration to me in ways I cannot express. Thank you.)



Rain cannot stop the mailman from delivering the mail nor, as pictured above, from picketing in support of a letter carriers' strike. The Williamsville branch post office above was one of many across the nation effected by the three-day strike. Although other unions are continuing the strike, the Buffalo area offices were back on the job Monday for at least a five-day period.

~ Reprinted from The Buffalo Evening News



Fred Diring (center, white shirt) surrounded by cheering Branch 3 members after the strike vote.

~ Photo from Time Magazine
March 1970

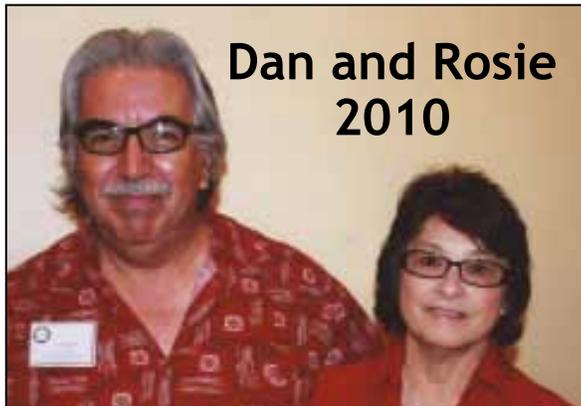
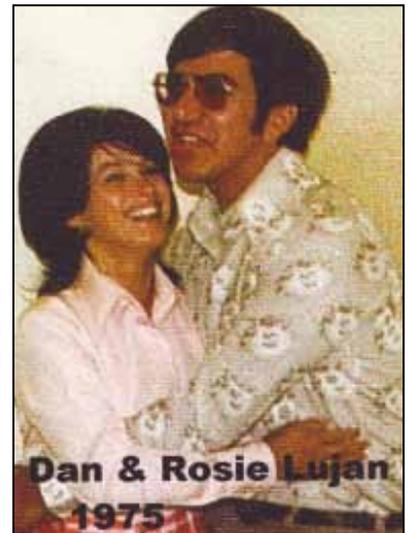
This excellent article is courtesy of The Buzz published in December 2011 by Buffalo, New York NALC Branch 3

Where are they now???

You might have worked next to that person in the next case for years. Then...they retired and (once

in a while) you've wondered where they are now.

Hmmm...



**Dan and Rosie
2010**

This is a list of every single NALC Branch 782 Retiree who pays their

\$7 dues a year to continue their membership in the NALC...and the city where they live. If you want, contact us and we can send one of these Retirees a note from you with a stamp. Stay in touch, give a smile!



Acedo, Fernando
Adams, Robert
Aguilar, Bennie
Alexander, Paul
Anderson, Debra
Arabe, Jovencio
Arnenson, Robert
Arredondo, Lupe
Ary, Ottis
Avalos, Jesse
Blanco, Donald
Breeding, Mary
Bricker, William
Brown, Harold
Burgos, Ricarte
Cameron, Mickey
Clark, Forrst
Combs, Edwin

Bakersfield, CA
Tatum, TX
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Gardnerville, NV
Bakersfield, CA
Tehachapi, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Caliente, CA
Dexter, MO
Arvin, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA

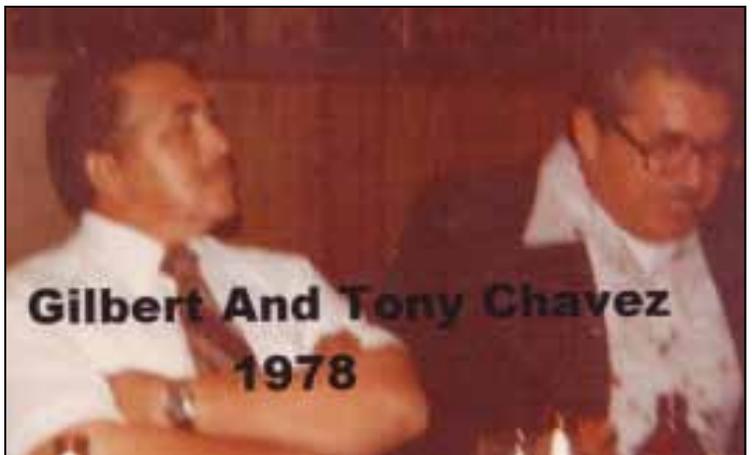
Combs, Linda
Corella, Armando
Countryman, Jane
Crawford, Frank
Crawford, R.M.

Bakersfield, CA
Bakersfield, CA
Avenal, CA
Ridgecrest, CA
Bakersfield, CA

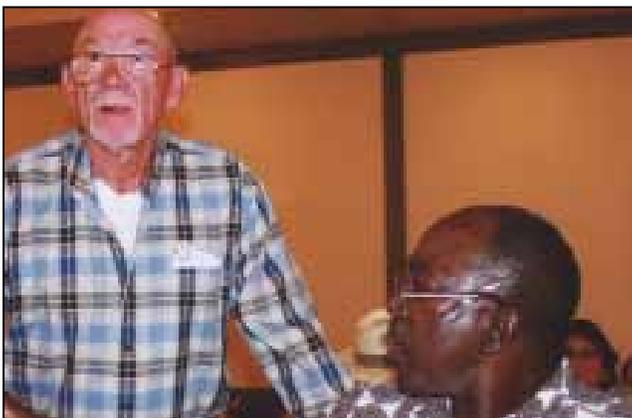
Suniga, Richard
 Sutton, Chuck
 Thomas, Bill
 Thomasy, Frank
 Thorne, Al
 Todd, Sandra
 Turner, Danny
 Van Buskirk, John
 Varela, Joyce
 Villalvazo, George
 Walker, Sam
 Webb Jr., L.C.
 White, Connie
 Wilder, Dicie
 Wiles, Deborah
 Willard, Forest
 Yaws, Loretta
 Zabala, Paul

Bakersfield, CA
 Atascadero, CA
 Taft, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Fresno, CA
 Petersburg, OH
 Amity, OR
 Bakersfield, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Shafter, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Bakersfield, CA
 Paso Robles, CA
 Taft, CA
 Bakersfield, CA

OUT THERE



Thank You!!!



***ALL of our
 Branch 782
 Retirees are
 Special!!!***

"Vintage" pictures courtesy of Mario & Irma Muniz. Other pictures from 2010 Branch 782 Retiree Dinner courtesy of Anita Holderman.

2012 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
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
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
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	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)	(661) 631-8520
LabCorp Lab Services	(661) 631-9258

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

NALC Prescription Drug Program
P.O. Box 94467
Palatine, Illinois 60094-4467

NALC Drug Prescription
"Claims" Program
P.O. Box 521926
Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2192

Optimum Health Behavioral Solutions
P.O. Box 30755
Salt Lake City, Utah 84130-0755
Questions: 1-877-468-1016

"Non"-Medicare Claims Submit to
CIGNA (Payor I.D. 62308) or mail
to P.O. Box 18804, Chatanooga, TN
37422-8004.

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

Preferred Provider
(PPO) Deductible:
\$300 Individual,
\$600 Self & Family—
Per Calendar Year

Some Websites for You...

Center for Disease Control	http://www.cdc.gov
American Public Health Assoc.	http://www.alpha.org
American Cancer Society	http://www.cancer.org
American Heart Association	http://americanheart.org
American Lung Association	http://www.lunusa.org
Diabetes Foundation	http://www.diabetis.org
YOUR Personal Health Record	http://www.nalc.org/depart.hbp
Asthma Information Center	http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma

Accupuncture!! Must be a state licensed or certified accupuncturist. Chiropractic! State licensed chiropractor or D.O. only.

Check out this PPO: Sendas Northwest Urgent Care
3409 Calloway Suite 101
Bakersfield, California 93312
Phone: (661) 587-2500
Hours: M-F 8:00 am - 9:00 pm; Sat & Sun 9:00 am - 7:00 pm

* Failure to pre-certify for in-patient hospitalization will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by our Plan. **YOU MUST** notify the Plan prior to undergoing radiology/imaging with doctor name and dates. Call: 1-877-220-6252.

** NALC Drug Prescription Program is **MANDATORY** generic (unless specified by your doctor, at additional cost to member). Preferred retail pharmacy 1st and 2nd fills, you pay 20% of cost of generic/30% of name brand. MAIL ORDER PRESCRIPTIONS when NALC is primary: 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand; 90 day supply \$5 for NALCSELECT generics (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$7.99 NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs), **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary); Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of cost for name brand, **MEDICARE PRIMARY** (mail order); 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 name brand; 90 day supply \$10 generic \$55 name brand; 90 day supply \$4 for NALCSELECT generic (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$4 for NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs); NALCSENIOR generic antibiotics are available; FREE for a 30 day supply, when Medicare is primary (certain antibiotics only).

MAIL ORDER SPECIALTY DRUGS (Bio-Tech drugs—**VERY EXPENSIVE**): **Your** cost for a 30 day supply is \$150; 60 day supply is \$250; and, 90 day supply is \$350. Some drugs (e.g. bio-tech asthma, diabetes, organ rejection, etc.) require prior approval before dispensing. You **MUST** call the Plan 1-800-237-2767.

Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782 HBP Rep.
(661) 834-5011

*Basil, I have a couple of jokes for our newsletter...
Some say: "Laughter lowers blood pressure." It just
makes me wet my pants! Mark Ramirez, HBP REP.*

FINDING JESUS

A man is stumbling, totally drunk through the woods, when he comes upon a preacher baptizing people in the river. The drunk stumbles into the river, and bumps into the preacher. The preacher—almost overcome by the smell of booze—asks the drunk, "Are you ready to find Jesus?"

"Yes, I am!" replies the drunk.

So the preacher grabs the drunk, and dunks him in the river. He pulls the man up and asks him, "Brother, have you found Jesus?" The drunk, replies, "No. I haven't." The preacher dunks the man under water again, pulls him up, and again asks the drunk, "Have you found Jesus, my brother?"

The drunk answers, "NO! I haven't found Jesus!"

The preacher is at his wits end, so he dunks the man under water—this time, for about 30 seconds. As the drunk begins to kick his arms and legs, the preacher pulls the man up. The preacher asks the drunk again. "For the love of God, have you found Jesus?"

The drunk catches his breath, and says to the preacher, "Are you sure, this is where he fell in????!!!"

MOST WANTED MAN

An elementary school class goes on a field trip to the police station. There, the officer points to a list of the 10 most wanted men. He tells the class, "These are the most wanted fugitives in the USA."

One little boy looks at the list, and asks, "This guy is the 'Most Wanted Man' in the whole USA?" The officer says, "Yes, we're still looking for him—but one of these days—we'll catch him."

The little boy stops to think for a second...then asks, "Well, why didn't you just keep him, when you took this picture?"

BLONDE JOKE

A highway patrolman pulled alongside a speeding car on the freeway. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that a blonde behind the wheel was knitting!

Realizing that she was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the officer cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled, "PULLOVER !!!"

"NO", the blonde yelled back, "IT'S A SCARF!"

Cherie was leaving a 7-11 with her morning coffee when she noticed a most unusual funeral procession approaching the nearby cemetery.

A long black hearse was followed by a second hearse about 50 feet behind. Behind the second hearse was a solitary woman walking a Pit Bull dog on a leash. Behind her were 200 women walking single file.

Cherie couldn't stand the curiosity.

She respectfully approached the woman walking the dog and said, "I am so sorry for your loss. I know now is bad time to disturb you, but I've never seen a funeral like this. Whose funeral is it?"



The widow replied, "Well, that first hearse is for my husband,"

Cherie asked, "What happened to him?"

The widow replied, "My dog attacked and killed him."

Cherie inquired further, "Well, who is in the second hearse?"

"His mistress. She tried to help my husband. Then, the dog turned on her."

A poignant and thoughtful moment of silence passes between the two women. Cherie asked, "Can I borrow the dog?"

The widow replied, "Get in line."

Excessing

What would happen if you were excessed? Test your knowledge about Excessing with this exam prepared by Instructor James D. Henry, RAA and Karen Eshabarr, Branch 214 at the State Convention

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ANSWERS...

1. A primary principle in effecting reassignments will be that dislocation and inconvenience to employees in the regular work force shall be kept to a minimum. (12.4.A and 12.5.B.1) True or False.
2. When management needs to reduce the number of employees in an installation other than by attrition the following applies (12.4.A)
 - a. Management must seek to excess employees to another _____ in the same installation.
 - b. Then management must seek to excess employees to same craft in _____.
 - c. Finally, management may then seek to excess employees to another _____ in another installation.
3. The Postal Service can require a Junior Full Time Regular to revert to PTF status in lieu of being excessed to another installation? (12.4.D) True or False.
4. Management has a contractual obligation to withhold residual positions for purposes of excessing. (12.5.B.2) True or False
5. When employees are excessed out of their installation, the National Business Agent of the Union may request at the Area level a _____ of the losing installation 60 days after the excessing of such employees. (12.4.C)
- 6 Limited or Light Duty people are not included in all excessing activity. (12.5.B.12) True or False.
7. A grade one letter carrier position is withheld. A grade one carrier has 3 years of seniority. A grade two carrier has 2 1/2 years of seniority. Which carrier would be properly excessed into the withheld position? (12.5.B.12) Grade One or Grade two.
8. Management is required to separate all Transitional Employees prior to excessing any letter carriers. (12.5.B.12) True or False.
9. When excessing to other crafts within an installation, the correct seniority when reassigned to the Letter Carrier craft shall be a new period of seniority. (12.5.C.5.a.4)
- True or False.
10. Management is not obligated to return the employee at the first opportunity to the craft from which they were reassigned. (12.5.C.5.a.5) True or False.
11. When an employee is returned to his/her original craft their seniority is reestablished as if the employee had served continuously in the original craft and had never been excessed. (12.5.C.5.a.6) True or False.
12. When letter carriers are involuntarily reassigned/excessed to the letter carrier craft in another installation they begin a new period of seniority. (12.5.C.5.b) True or False.
13. When two or more such vacancies are simultaneously available, first choice of duty assignment shall go to the senior employee. (12.5.C.5.b.4) True or False.
14. Part-time Flexible Carriers are not subject to excessing. (12.5.C.8) True or False.

This information was (shamelessly) "lifted" from NALC Branch 290's Sep-Dec 2011 *Beast of Burden*.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT EXCESSING

1. True
2. a) craft; b) another installation; c) craft
3. False
4. True
5. Comparative work hour report
6. False
7. Grade One
8. True (except TE's designated as FSS)
9. True
10. False
11. True
12. False
13. True
14. False

Hopefully, you will never have to cope with the changes you will be required to deal with if you find yourself "excess" to the needs of your delivery unit. But, if you do, you need to know that there *ARE* rules and safeguards...

VICE-PRESIDENT

Beki Serwach



If anyone has noticed, management in our offices no longer provides FMLA forms to the employees upon request. It seems they have been instructed to refer the employees to call into the eRMS system, as HRSSC, otherwise known as Shared Services, is now the sole administrator of FMLA.

Coordinators that I have had the opportunity to talk with in that department have given me a much better understanding on how to best expedite the paperwork. First of all, if you have a condition that you are able to schedule such as a surgery, you should notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Fill out a 3971 requesting your choice of leave and in the remarks write "FMLA".

At that time, your supervisor should enter it into the system as FMLA pending. That will generate a case number for your condition as well as the FMLA forms to be sent to your home address on file with the USPS. **Write the FMLA number in the remarks section on your 3971!** I would also suggest to put it in your cell phone so you have it with you at all times for easy access.

When you send in your FMLA papers remember

to be sure that your FMLA case number is on each page your sending in so that it can be traced back to you. I have been told by Shared Services that the most common hold up is that forms are being sent without a coordinating case number.

Now, if you call in sick and you are reporting a new FMLA condition, you will automatically be sent the paperwork with the case number that they give you over the phone. If you're calling in sick and you can't find or don't have your FMLA case number with you, just say, "I don't have it" and continue with the call. It is important to do that so you are on record as requesting FMLA leave. When you go back to work, make sure your 3971 reflects your request for FMLA leave, again, write it in the remarks.

If the need arises to contact an FMLA coordinator we must dial the same number we use to call in sick, or 1-877-477-3273. Follow the prompt by selecting 5 and then 6 on your touch-tone keypad to talk to someone about your case. In my experience, they are much more helpful than when it was handled locally.

Article courtesy of the February 2012 *Front Lines* published by NALC Branch 4374 in Center Line, Michigan

“Memories”

2012 presents a lot of changes for the Post Office with the possible closure of 50% of the nation’s processing plants—including the Bakersfield Plant. But, 2011 initiated change of its own with the closing one of its oldest Stations: “East Bakersfield” (also known as Station “A” for the old timers). Station “A” (on Kentucky Street) had been around since the 60’s. I’ve asked some retired Carriers to write something about their experience from earlier years; but, if I don’t get anything I can still share a couple of my recollections.

As a PTF, I was transferred from Downtown Bakersfield to EB station in 1999. My first week there I was seeing and hearing all the Carriers talking about DPS and the problems that it caused. EB was the last station to go on-line with DPS. Since Downtown had DPS already, I didn’t understand what everyone was upset about. But looking back, I know it’s all about “Fear of Change”. DPS was a big change. And, they were right. It **WAS** a big change. Look at the changes to the routes from 1999! But, over time, we adapt.

Because the Letter Carrier delivery operation was moved out of East Bakersfield and relocated to Brundage, I got to thinking back to who was at my office when I first got there and who was on each assignment. *I ALSO WANT TO SHARE PICTURES THAT I TOOK ON THAT LAST DAY THAT CARRIERS DELIVERED MAIL OUT OF THAT OLD BUILDING ON KENTUCKY STREET..*

1999

500 Rudy Magana
 501 Sonia Brunwiski
 502 R.C. Castruita
 503 George Vaquera
 504 Mary Breeding
 505 Halario Holguin
 506 Vacant
 507 Richard Delre
 508 Ester Gerner
 509 Vacant
 510 Regina Fierro
 511 Joseph Conteres
 512 Joy Cordova
 513 Joe Dangler
 514 Jose Gonzales
 515 Lupe Arredondo
 516 Rick Gerdes
 517 Alfred Martinez
 518 Dan Medina
 519 Juan Rivera
 520 Jimmie Salie
 521 Mario Muniz
 522 Amy Callaso
 523 Harold Rodgers

T6’s - Brian Shellcross, Ray Moya, Sal Salazar, John Van Buskirk, Emma Maldonada

UR’s - Tony Gonzalez and Mama Audrey

PTF’s - Jeff Harrington, George Duarte, and Sharon Fisher

Clerks – Mary Baltazar, Ophelia Morales, Cande Gallagos, and Karen Young

2011

500 Cherylyn Morgan
 501 Dan Medina
 502 **ELIMINATED**
 503 Mark Sanchez
 504 **ELIMINATED**
 505 Michelle Hall
 506 Vacant
 507 Juan Rodriguez
 508 **ELIMINATED**
 509 **ELIMINATED**
 510 Brian Shellcross
 511 Vacant
 512 Joy Cordova
 513 **ELIMINATED**
 514 Jeff Harrington
 515 Frank Martinez
 516 Rick Gerdes
 517 Steve Lubrecht
 518 **ELIMINATED**
 519 Juan Rivera
 520 Barbara Gonzales
 521 **AUX**
 522 **ELIMINATED**
 523 Jorge Duarte

T6’s - Paul Salazar, Vacant, Vacant

UR – Esther Gerner

TE’s – Robert Guererro, Yuri Garcia, Vicky Guererro, Singh Gill, Gill Gurpreet

PTF’s - Romijit Shergill, Ben Esparza, Kumar Gushan

Clerks - Cande Gallagos, Tony Cervantes, Chris Jaquin, Vanessa Halle, Mimi Little



**UNITED STATES POST OFFICE
EAST BAKERSFIELD STATION
93305**



There are many other notable names that had a stint at EB during those twelve years: Melissa Wiles, Ron Gross, Mark Hutchinson, Cindy Jimenez, Greg Barraza, Jamie Paddock, Mario Marin, Mona Martin, Paul Greenfield, and Tony Trieu.



One thing that stood out in those years is how many routes were eliminated. And

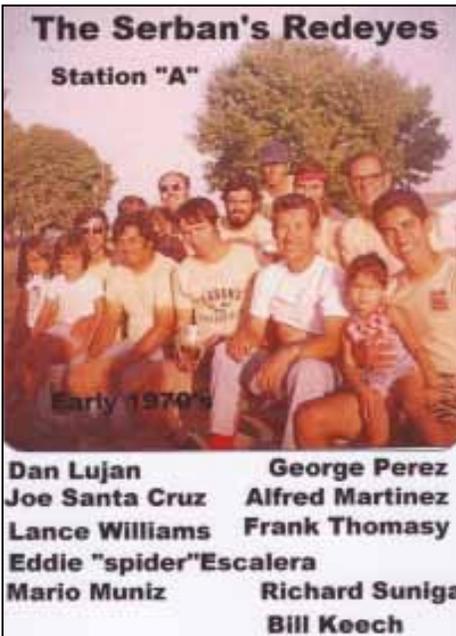
only 5 carriers and 1 clerk from the original cast are still there. And, with Rick Gerdes dealing with job-related health issues, Joy Cordova's name is the only one who still works Route 512. (Of course, even if the route numbers have stayed the same, many of the current routes are *way* different from the way they were in 1999!)

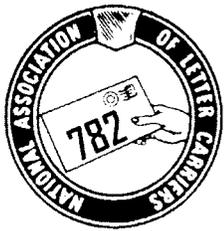
Yes, times have changed and will continue to change. As I reminisce about being the rookie in "99"—and now a Veteran Carrier who is slowly becoming an "Old Timer"—I constantly think about how much change the next ten years will bring...

I remember great memories at the Kentucky station. And, as we moved to Brundage and "adapted" to the new home, we became East Brundage. We will create new memories there as well!

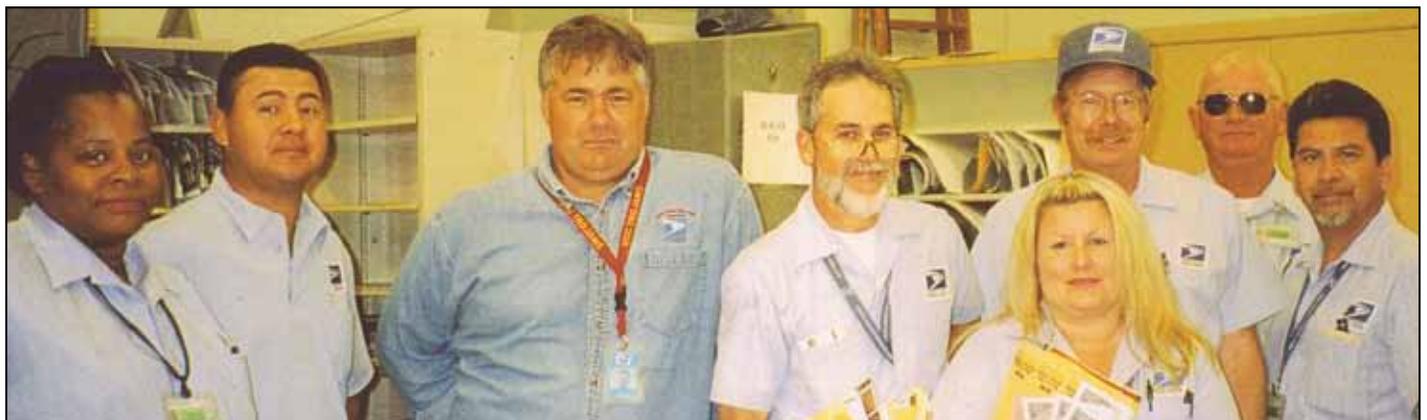
"Just Another Day In Paradise"

JEFF HARRINGTON
Route 514





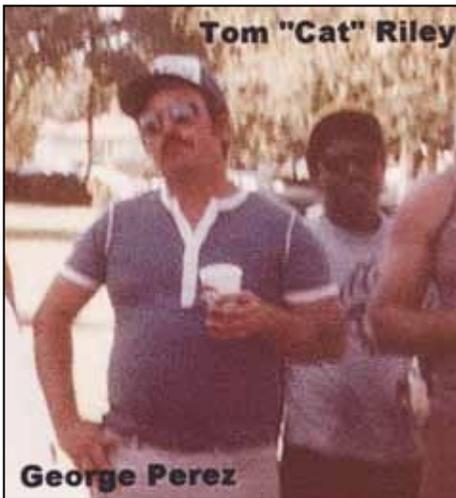
A trip down “Memory Lane”— by way of Kentucky Street...





E.B. Station Baseball Team 1980

Paul Hernandez, Richard Suniga, Joe Santa Cruz, Jim Shropshire, Lupe Arredondo, Mario Muniz, Ron Carlon, Santos, John Tungate, Raul Herrera



Many of these pictures are courtesy of either Mario Muniz or Jeff Harrington. The memories are courtesy of the many Carriers who were a part of the legacy of the Station "A" or "E.B." family...



Some old names from pictures from East Bakersfield—



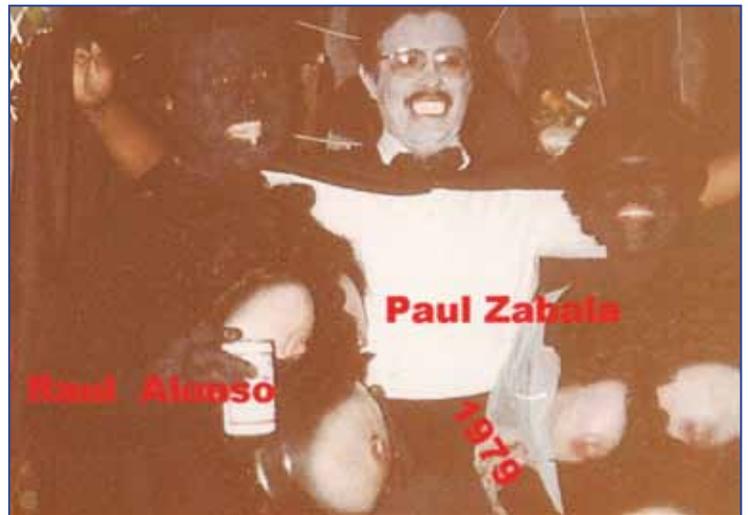
Station "A" Serban's Redeyes



& Mrs. L.C Webb
Mr & Mrs. Paul Hernandez
1979



NALC Union Picnic



Paul Zabala
Paul Almoso
1979



1980

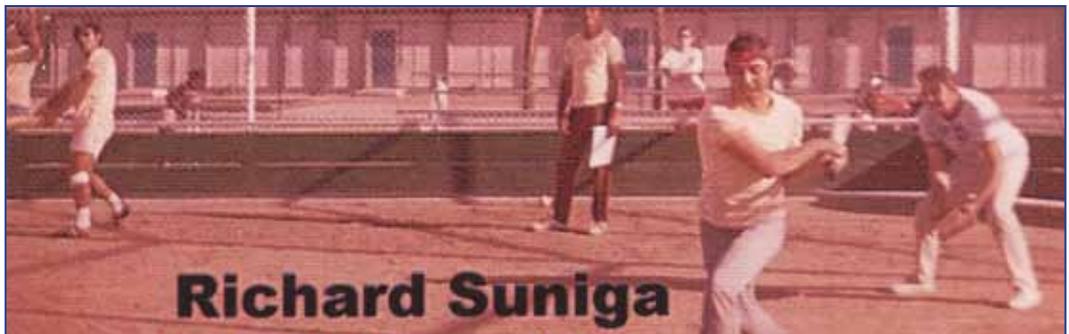
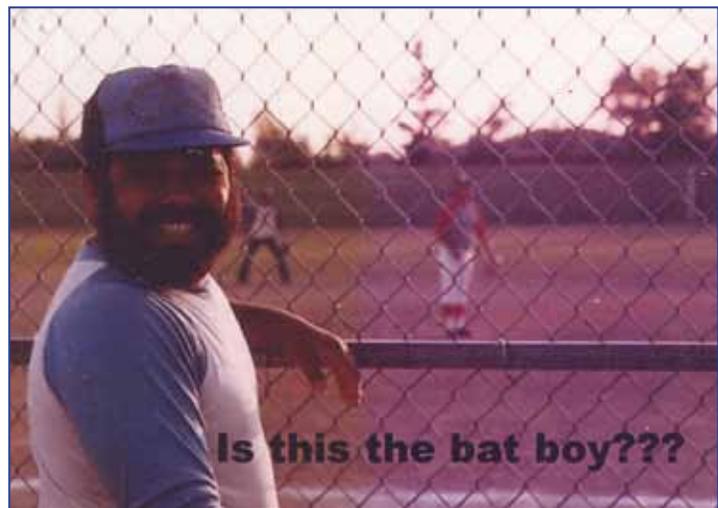
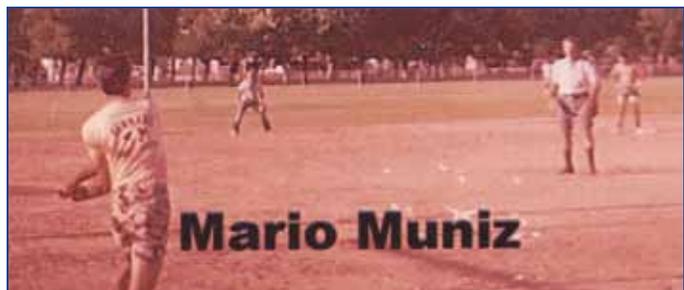
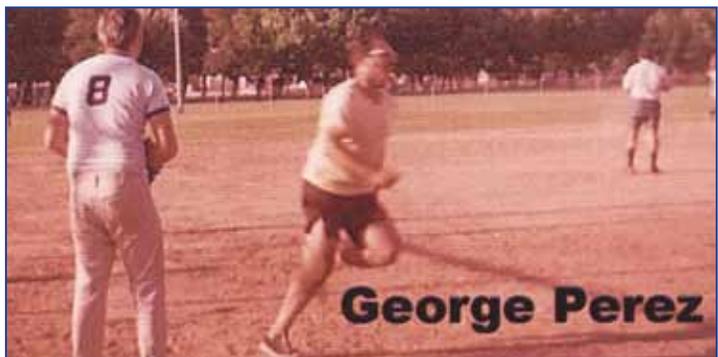
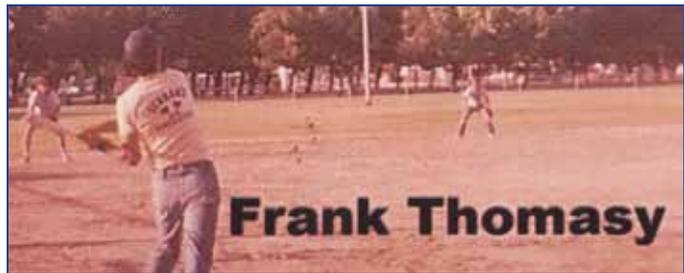
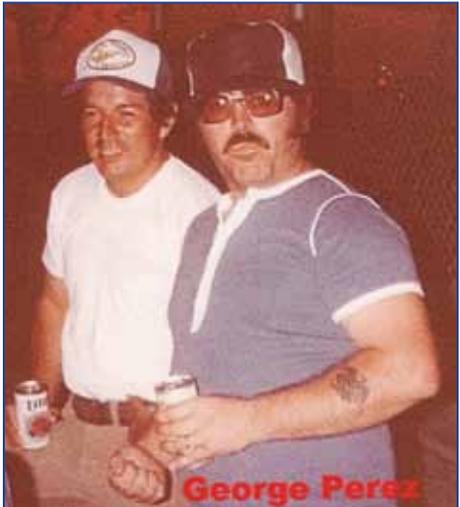
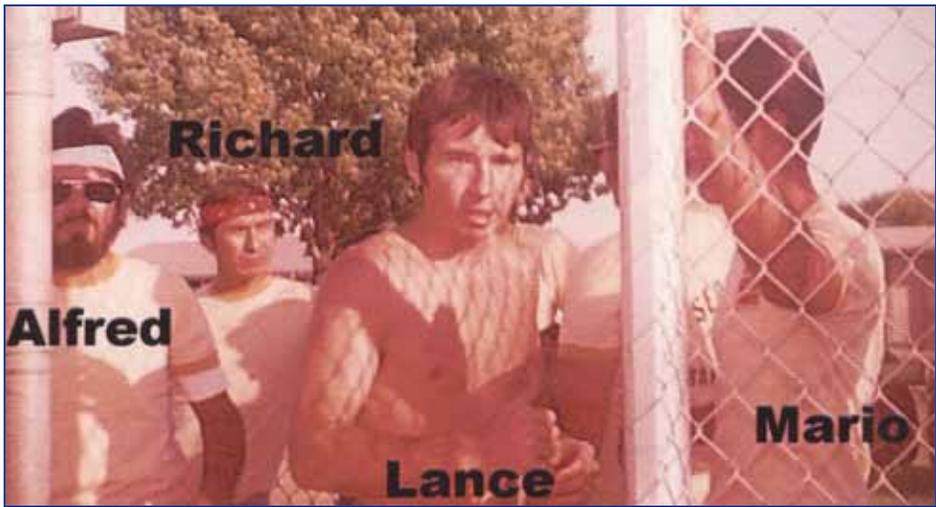


Jessica & George Perez
Nancy
Tony Garcia



Joe
Mario
Richard





Special thanx for many of these pix go to Mario and Irma Muniz. What a treasure trove!!!

Thinking about Retiring?

Things I learned in the process of retiring.

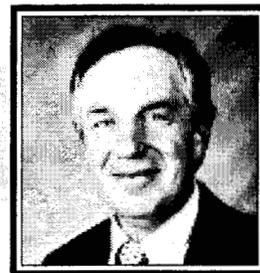
Being a techie I thought it would be easy to apply for retirement online, get my blue book, fill out all the forms on the computer, and then print them up and send them in the envelope provided by the Postal Service. Boy was I wrong!

First off, when you apply online, they send you an electronic "Blue Book". If you want to read everything away from your computer, you have to print the booklet with your printer. My booklet contained 230 pages. Way more than I was willing to print on my little inkjet. So the only way to read it was on my computer. I later found out, at my retirement counseling session, that had I contacted HR Shared Service Center (HRSSC) at 1-877-477-3273, Option 5 they would have sent me a physical copy of the "Blue Book".

Secondly, with both the electronic and the physical "Blue Book", you have to fill them in with a pen. The electronic form is not fillable but only a copy of what you would get in your book if it was mailed to you. I do not know about you but my penmanship is not that great and I did not want the process grinding to a halt because of some unintelligible scribbling on my form. So I did what any techie would do. I googled for a fillable SF 2801, Application for Immediate Retirement and downloaded it. I also found an SF 2818, Continuation of Life Insurance Coverage. Happy with that, I entered the information in all the appropriate boxes and printed them up. If you are not sure how to fill the form out you can wait and do it during your retirement counseling session.

I scheduled my counseling session to be done "On the clock". After I got my day and time I informed my Postmaster of it and requested a quiet room to have my session. On the day of the counseling session I put in an Auxiliary Assistance slip for an hour and returned to the Post Office a few minutes before the start time. I had all the forms that I had filled out, a notepad, pen and my cell phone (I wanted to use the speakerphone function so I did not have to hold the receiver.) You can have them call the PO phone number if you would prefer it. If your spouse wants to be there for the session, the PO must provide a space for both of you.

Steve Futach



My counselor called about 5 minutes late, so do not be concerned if they are a few minutes late. The first thing you talk about is making sure all your time worked is listed. I had two career employments along with three casual appointments. All were listed. We got started right away and this is where printing my fillable forms and not having a physical "Blue Book" caused some confusion. The counselor would tell me to go to page 28. I would then have to ask what form it was and go to that form. After all the forms are filled out we looked at how my retirement annuity would be calculated. My actual service time plus my time represented by sick leave gives me my total time. This is where you have to look to make sure you do not lose almost a whole month of work time. Any days under 30 do not count. So if you have 33 years 7 months and 28 days total time your annuity will be based on 33 years 7 months. The 28 days will be dropped. Working two more days or having 16 more hours of sick leave will give you another month of time.

Since I am married they require you to send a copy of your marriage license. Make sure you have the original or you will have to order a copy. Your counselor will explain your deductions, ask if you want federal taxes taken out and tell you when to expect your first annuity check. Until OPM finalizes your retirement package you will receive an estimated annuity. This can take from two months to a year depending on any withdrawals you may have previously made. I was then informed retirees are receiving a COLA in January and I would get an immediate increase of 11/12 of 3.6%. After all of your questions are answered the specialist will give you some numbers you can call if any problems arise. Also, your terminal check has to be picked up at the PO.

I am now contemplating holding off a month or two to see if this buyout congress is proposing comes to pass. You do have the right to cancel your retirement up to 5pm of your last day. So the New Year may find me still employed, but the time is short no matter what.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Article courtesy of the January 2012 *Front Lines* published by NALC Branch 4374 in Center Line, Michigan

PTF's and Junior Regulars also have issues...

PRESIDENT'S REPORT **By Jerry Andersen**

I have been speaking to many PTF's lately and have heard their complaints. Basically, they want to know why they haven't been made regular, so this seems an appropriate time for a little history. In 2007, the Pacific Area wrote the NALC business agent a letter saying that due to the implementation of the Flat Sorting Machines (FSS), they were going to begin withholding carrier positions. Any route that went un-bid during a bidding cycle would now be withheld, keeping the senior PTF from being placed there. The route became a "residual vacancy", held without a regular, pending excessing. Since 2007, there haven't been any promotions of PTFs within the Branch.

Some may feel that this entire process is unfair, since prior to 2007, a PTF's seniority allowed them to be promoted into the residual vacancy. Article 12 in the National Agreement discusses in great detail what happens when there is excessing. Dislocation and inconvenience to the full and part time flexible employees must be kept to a minimum, 'within the needs' of the service. Actually, withholding full and part-time residual vacancies is not merely a management right, it is an obligation. National Arbitrator Gamser wrote this decision in December, 1979. As a result of excessing, we have begun to see new faces in the carrier craft.

How long can withholding last? The National Agreement states in relevant part: "there is no established contractual time limit on the length of time management may withhold residual positions." The 'rule of reason' applies here and is dependent on the full facts and circumstances of each individual case. There are actually a few areas in the country where FSS has been

implemented and withholding has ended. PTFs are being promoted.

If a junior regular carrier decides in this situation not to be excessed, they have the right to revert back to PTF status and stay where they are. Once they decide to make the move to another location, they take their current office seniority with them. If a vacancy opens up in their former office, they have one opportunity to submit a bid to return. If they fail to bid, they may lose their retreat rights. The carrier must be notified by their former office of the bids coming up.

Withholding full and part-time residual vacancies is not only a management right, it is an obligation.

The South Peninsula and the Greater East Bay have begun FSS implementation. Junior full time carriers in offices where a number of routes were lost were given notices that they were going to be excessed. They were given a list of cities where residual vacancies existed and had to choose where they wished to be relocated. As of September 7, there were 38 positions in the San Francisco District. Seniority determines in which city the carriers will work. The locations ranged from Redwood City in the South to Crescent City in the North.

Article courtesy of the January 2012 *Front Lines* published by NALC Branch 4374 in Center Line, Michigan

A Letter Carrier's World of Pain

by Dave Chelseth, Branch 114 Steward

"I just want surgery and I want to get back to work." Those are the words of Randy Mayfield, a letter carrier who was injured on the job on July 5th of this year. As of Dec 19th, Mayfield has been without a job and without pay since that summer incident. He's caught in a system that offers months, and sometimes years, of frustration and pain—pain both physical and mental.

Mayfield went to work at the Mt. Royal station on July 5th to face another long day of heavy mail volume and very few carriers on duty. He'd worked for 60 plus hours a week for months. It was just another summer of overtime, Mayfield's 5th since starting with the post office in 2007. Not a lot of rest, but lots of overtime. Then with one tray of mail, one twist, and one slip, his life became a living nightmare. The doctors have said I'm "totally incapacitated" said Mayfield. Pain radiates down his leg, coming from a crushed disk in his lower back that is pinching his nerve.

Mayfield submitted forms to the office of Occupational Workers Compensation Program (OWCP) to have a doctor perform surgery on his back. On August 19th, Mayfield received his last day of 45 days of Continuation Of Pay (COP) and then on August 22nd he received his first denial of work relatedness to his injury. No surgery. No work. And now, no pay.

Mayfield then filed another request for surgery. On October 26th this request was also denied. The reason stated: "Your physician must offer well-reasoned rationale as to how your mail delivery activities from 7/5/11 caused or contributed to the diagnosis given."

This is the 'causal relationship' that physicians must make between an injury and its work related cause. It's not something doctors do naturally as part of their write ups. Doctors describe an injury to the body in medical terms that the insurance companies understand. However, as it is written about in many issues of the Postal Record, including the December 2011 issue, a causal relationship HAS to be made by the doctor. If it is not, the OWCP will deny the claim. The burden of proof falls on the employee. With each review process there can be a 120 day wait for an answer. Basically, months can go by with the employee waiting for an answer and then, like in Mayfield's case, being told they need to provide more evidence as to the cause of the injury. Four months of waiting only to have to wait some more.

Mayfield is now on his third OWCP request. This request includes a detailed letter from his doctor. Mayfield is still in pain. He's run out of money—paying bills is getting hard-- and is just trying to keep his life and his marriage together. The strain has been intense. To say "he's frustrated" is an understatement. But, said Mayfield, "I've never been a person who gets mad or mean. When I got out of the Gulf War (Mayfield served in the army before becoming a letter carrier) I thought that nothing could be worse than that". He was smart enough to have saved some money for emergencies. With no sick leave as a "Transitional Employee" he quickly ran out of savings. He has had to sell things off. He has had to accept charity. He is out of options. Unemployment has been denied as well. "Because my body is incapable of working, I don't get unemployment," said Mayfield.

Help and support for Mayfield has come from his fellow carriers. "Wonderful," said Mayfield when asked if the Union had been helpful. "I've been in constant contact with Scott (Dulas, NALC president). Whenever he can't answer a question he's on the phone with the business agents." The union has helped Mayfield throughout this ordeal, including the filing of grievances on his behalf and the constant inquiries into the status of his case. Said Dulas, "The people who think that someone would go on Worker's Compensation to get out of work have no idea."

Recently things took a turn toward the absurd as Mayfield was served with a request to show up at the post office to have a "Day in Court". The charge: "Failure to maintain a regular work schedule." Mayfield's 480 hours of Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) time had run out, thus he should, according to the Post Office, be back at work.

SO, just to be CLEAR. Mayfield CANNOT go back to work because he is injured. He CANNOT have surgery to correct the injury because the paperwork wasn't just right. He CANNOT receive unemployment benefits because he is incapable of working. And he's at risk of losing his job at the post office because he hasn't shown up for work. Again, Randy Mayfield: "I just want surgery and I want to get back to work."

Article courtesy of the January 2012 *Zenith Branch News* published by NALC Branch 114 in Duluth, Minnesota

President's Report

I want to share some recent news with you that your Postmaster, Manager or Supervisor will not share with you for the obvious reasons. Recently, on the Postal Reporter.com website there was an interesting article written by APWU Southwest Florida President Sam Wood entitled "USPS staffing cuts are not created equal". Mr. Wood writes, "This comes while USPS Postmaster General, Senior Management Officials and USPS Media Spokespeople continuously go before the media and explain how the mail volume has drastically declined over the past 5 years and speak of gloom and doom and the further decline in mail volumes in the future. Meanwhile, there were/are 796 more Senior Level Managers who make more money than the average employee at USPS Headquarters than in 1997. Why is this? Why the need for more of them? Why isn't this being discussed?"

It is important to note that the USPS has made these numbers harder to find since I began writing about this issue in 2009. All of the old information has been hidden or deleted online. Since I compiled the original numbers and kept them, I only had to find the September, 2011 employment numbers to present this information.

Here are some of the numbers provided by Mr. Wood that you might find interesting;

Staffing Changes from 1997 through Sept., 2011

- Headquarters Senior Management = Total GAIN of +796 Jobs
- Headquarters Employee Staffing = Total Loss of -237 Jobs
- Local Level Management Staffing = Total Loss of -25,016 Jobs
- **All Career Craft Employee Staffing = Total Loss of -189,947 Jobs**

Staffing Changes since March, 2011:

- Headquarters Senior Management = Total Loss of 74 Jobs (still at +40.84% gain since 1997)
- Headquarters Employee Staffing = Total Loss of 503 Jobs
- Local Level Management Staffing = Total Loss of 5,224 Jobs
- **All Career Craft Employee Staffing = Total Loss of 11,134 Jobs**



by *Ken Nunn*

As you can see, even with 74 USPS Senior Management Job cuts, they are still at a 40.84% gain since 1997. This being while every other employment area of the USPS has been slashed by well over 20%. Now we all know when you use postal math this is all equal right?

I would like to congratulate Representative Peter DeFazio Democrat from the state of Oregon for his request of the Obama administration to fire Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. Mr. DeFazio states, "This guy, this so-called postmaster general, should be fired because of a lack of any imagination or initiative," "He's proposing the death knell for the great United States Postal Service."

"They think somehow the private sector will take over," DeFazio said of Republicans. "Tell me who in the private sector is going to deliver a letter for 45 cents to a small rural community 40 miles from the nearest, or 100 miles from the nearest, sorting facility? That's not going to happen. These people will be deprived of any meaningful service."

"I guess we'll become the first developed nation on earth without a postal service, just like we're the only developed industrial nation on earth without universal healthcare," DeFazio said.

Well said Representative DeFazio, I couldn't have said it better myself. With all the news in regards to our postal service I have not heard UPS or FedEx step up and say their interested in taking over our work, have you?

Article courtesy of the January 2012 *Postman's View* published by NALC Branch 231 in Fresno, California

6th Annual Battle of the Stations

Where:

Southwest Lanes
3610 Wible Rd.
Bakersfield, CA 93309
661.834.2695

When:

February 19, 2012
Sunday • 11:30 am - 3 pm
(Check-in 10:30 am)

Cost:

\$80 per team
(\$20 per person)
Includes 3 games and shoes

RAFFLE PRIZES

The Winner Circle

2007 Stockdale Fab4
2007 Dole Ct. BowlFrogs
2009 EB Kentucky St. Kids
2010 EB Kentucky St. Kids
2011 EB Kentucky St. Kids

**Who will win
this year?**

Team up with your co-workers at your station to get a shot at having bragging rights on what station truly has the best employees. Remember to pick a name for your team! You will need a 4 person team. (men, women, or mixed - postal employees only) with at least 3 members of your team from your station to qualify for the championship. Retired employees welcomed.

Deadline: February 17th

I will need teams who want to participate on sending the money, check, money order and the names of each player to me by this date to reserve the lanes. I only have so many lanes reserved.

First to pay, first to play.

**POSTAL EMPLOYEES
ONLY**



Music by



Contact:

Ralph Ramirez

For more info: 827-8025 after 4 pm

Send everything to

3200 Larson, Bakersfield 93304



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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).

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Rick Plummer, Webmaster



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Permit Number 32

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

General Meeting

Tuesday
January 24, 2012
7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

Life is always full of change. That's just a fact. The future for each of us is going to be shaped by many forces. Some things we can control. On the other hand, there are other things that we can't. To deal with future events, it is a good thing to remember where we've been.

Check out names and pix on pages 16-19 and 24-29...

