

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

### E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN  
DELANO  
MOJAVE

AVENAL  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST  
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
TRONA

BORON  
McFARLAND  
TAFT  
WASCO



CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901

VOLUME LXXXI NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2010

at the  
**Mike:**



**The ability to protect your Rights starts at the most basic level.**

**I suggest you read this excellent article...**

## Things You Should Know about Official Discussions

by Charles Gonzalez,  
Chief Steward in San Leandro, CA

“Discussions cannot be cited as elements of an employee’s past record in any future disciplinary action. Discussions may be used (when they are relevant and timely) *only* to establish that an employee has been made aware of some particular obligation or responsibility.

Discussions are unique interactions with management in that the Carrier does not have the right to have a Steward present during the Discussion. A supervisor usually takes notes of the date and topic discussed. *A Carrier can also take notes.* The supervisor’s notes can be requested during any subsequent disciplinary action.

Official Discussions are supposed to be used to inform employees of any deficiencies in the performance of their work, or for minor offenses committed by an employee. This is outlined in Article 16.2 of the National Agreement.

For minor offenses by an employee, management has a responsibility to discuss such matters with the employee. Discussions of this type shall be held in private between the employee and the supervisor. Such discussions are not considered discipline and are not grievable.

Following such discussions, there is no prohibition against the supervisor and/or the employee making a personal notation of the date and subject matter for their own personal record(s). However, no notation or other information pertaining to

*Continued on Next Page...*

such Discussion shall be included in the employee's personnel folder. While such discussions may not be cited as an element of prior adverse record in any subsequent disciplinary action against an employee, **they may be—where relevant and timely—relied upon to establish that employees have been made aware of their obligations and responsibilities.** (Emphasis added.)

## TWISTED THE INTENT

Somewhere in the application of this contractual article it seems that management has twisted the intent of the discussion into an opportunity to get results in the only way that management knows how—by intimidation. Sadly enough, this bully mentality works just enough, and on just enough people to justify the use of it...because the front line supervisor is able to "make the numbers".

As is stated in the above cited Article 16.2, a Discussion is *an opportunity to make the employee aware of their obligations and responsibilities*, and for the employer to discuss with the employee minor offenses.

## OUT THERE



However, in my office (San Leandro, part of the Bay Valley District in the East & South San Francisco Bay Area) and maybe in your office as well, management has chosen to ignore the last part of the article—that employees have been made aware of their obligations and responsibilities.

Letting an employee know what their responsibilities and obligations are makes perfect sense if one is expected to improve their performance. But if you are not told what it is you're doing wrong, how can you be expected to improve the alleged deficiency?

## PRELUDE TO DISCIPLINE

This article goes on to reiterate that nothing prohibits the supervisor or the employee from making personal notations of the date and subject matter for their own personal record. This is important, because in many cases a Discussion is often the prelude to a supervisor's plan to discipline an employee. If an employee can document that he/she has been given an Official Discussion, but they have not been informed of how they have been deficient or how they have not met a certain obligation or

responsibility, this makes it more difficult for a supervisor to discipline an employee for something they may not have done.

It should not surprise anyone that today's management will use these "so called" Discussions in an attempt to give discipline the appearance of progression.

If this type of situation happens to you, you should tell the supervisor that you don't understand what it is that you are being given a Discussion for. You should ask them to explain further.

If you don't get an explanation that you can understand—or if the supervisor refuses to explain—ask to speak with your Shop Steward. It is always a good idea to get someone else to document the fact that the supervisor did not tell you what you did wrong."

This article is courtesy of the January-February 2010 edition of *The Voice* of San Francisco, CA  
NALC Branch 214.

# Minutes of the January 2010 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 26th day of January, 2010. The flag salute was led by Sergeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from Arvin, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Lamont, Oildale, South, Stockdale, Avenal, Boron and Taft. Also present was Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga, Webmaster Rick Plummer, OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes, Emma Gonzales of the Social and Recreation Committee, and Legislative Liaison Diana Chavez.

Basil Zuniga made a motion that the minutes of the December 2009 meeting be accepted as printed in the Newsletter. Seconded by Jerry Patterson and the motion passed.

## REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Teresa Ortega reported that the picnic will be held on April 11th at Jastro Park from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., lunch will be served from noon to 2 p.m. Basil Zuniga reported that E. B. folded the newsletter last month, a lot of people attended and they did a great job. Next month it will be Hillcrest Station.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery thanked Jason Munoz for all his work as the Assistant Newsletter Editor. Jason has stepped down as of the first of the month. Basil Zuniga in-

formed the members present that after the meeting Branch 78 in Columbus, Ohio will hold a telephone meeting to discuss the impact of the Flat Sorting Machines. All members interested should stay after the meeting.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that \$19,337.64 was collected for December 2009 and \$7,014.32 was collected for the month of January 2010.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly asked that anyone needs to change their deductions or has a problem with their W-2 please contact her.

Beginning Balance	\$40,063.44
Dues and Income	\$13,326.68
Interest Income	\$9.03
Total Balance	\$53,394.15
Total Expenses	\$44,289.01

The 50/50 MDA Drawing was won by Darryl Holderman.

The \$400.00 Drawing would have been won by Joseph Contreras if he had been present.

There were 42 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
KIM GERDES  
Branch 782 Recording Secretary

## NON-MEMBER LIST December 2009

*416 OF THE 439 CRAFT EMPLOYEES IN  
CITIES WE SERVE ARE NALC MEMBERS!  
WE HAVE ACHIEVED A TOTAL OF 94.98%.*

<b>DOWNTOWN STATION</b> Dale Pearce Javier Cruz	<b>DOLE COURT</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>BORON</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>McFARLAND</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>TAFT</b> B. W. Krier K. J. Hughes
<b>SOUTH STATION</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>STOCKDALE</b> James Oh G.S. Saran	<b>CALIFORNIA CITY</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>MOJAVE</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>TEHACHAPI</b> V. L. Johnson
<b>EAST BAKERSFIELD</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>CAMINO MEDIA</b> F. Medina, Jr.	<b>DELANO</b> C. V. Quebral L. A. Campos	<b>RIDGECREST</b> S. R. Pierce H. G. Blanco R. M. Noke T. K. Miller	<b>TRONA</b> S. L. Walent B. R. Dame K. K. Treat
<b>HILLCREST</b> A. White	<b>ARVIN</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>EDWARDS</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>	<b>SHAFTER</b> L. M. New M. D. Voights	<b>WASCO</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>
<b>BRUNDAGE</b> David Kinglee	<b>AVENAL</b> <i>100% UNION!!!</i>	<b>LAMONT</b> <i>100% Union!!!</i>		

# Inside Story Headline

## “AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH”

by Edward Meredith,  
NALC Branch 116

A customer asked the other day, “Don’t you get tired of delivering all this junk mail?” Actually, No, I don’t. Why? Because mail is mail, whether “junk”, First Class, magazines or parcels. If it has postage on it, it is mail.

And what do I do for a living? I deliver mail. The problem is there is less and less of it to deliver, and we all are walking or driving longer distances to have 8 hours of work. The “Mailman” became a fixture in the American way of life. We were that link between someone and somewhere. However, modern technology has put our way of life in question.

But, there are many things we can do to build our business and keep it.

In the business world I came from, in pre-Postal days, you did not simply sit around and wait until customers no longer came to your door before you took action. Instead, you made business decisions that are designed to bring in more customers and more revenue. Unlike the pet shop owner who does not want to sell any pets because they would miss their love and affection, we cannot sit around and wait. And we cannot simply open the Post Office doors for business every day and believe it is a good day if we are not bothered by any customers at the front window that day before closing the doors that night. Long lines are after all a good thing, in some respects, as it means someone wants to use our services to mail something.

### Let’s face the facts.

The Postal Service was established from the beginning to be a communication service for government and for the public. We connected the country as we progressed from the Atlantic to the Pacific whether by horse, wagon, train or

plane. Modern technology has caught up with us, though, *and we need to progress to keep up.*

Computers have provided us with e-mail, which has made communication instantaneous. We find ourselves in a situation much like the buggy whip manufacturers at the beginning of the 20th Century.

Automobiles were just coming into play, and many of the workers at the buggy whip factory purchased cars to make the drive to work to make buggy whips faster and easier. However, at about the same time the Titanic sank so did the buggy whip factory because cars were taking over as the main source of transportation.

How many times have I been asked for my e-mail address only to tell someone I do not use e-mail as a matter of principal. I am a MAILMAN, and cutting my own throat is not something I practice on a daily basis. I do not want to end up like the buggy whip employee who loses his job and drives home in his new car wondering how he is going to make the next payment on it.

Consider how many of you reading this article right now have used e-mail today. Now consider the 850,000 Postal employees who have used e-mail today.

Look at it this way. A first-class letter goes for 44 cents. Times that by one e-mail sent by each Postal employee in one day. That equals \$374,000.00. Multiply that by seven days each week. That equals \$2,618,000.00.

Fifty-two weeks in a year equals an astonishing \$136,360,000.00!

If even only half of those Postal employees used a buggy whip...er... First-class mail instead of that one e-mail, the amount is *still* a staggering \$68,060,000.00.

*And that, my friends and co-workers, is at just one e-mail per day...*

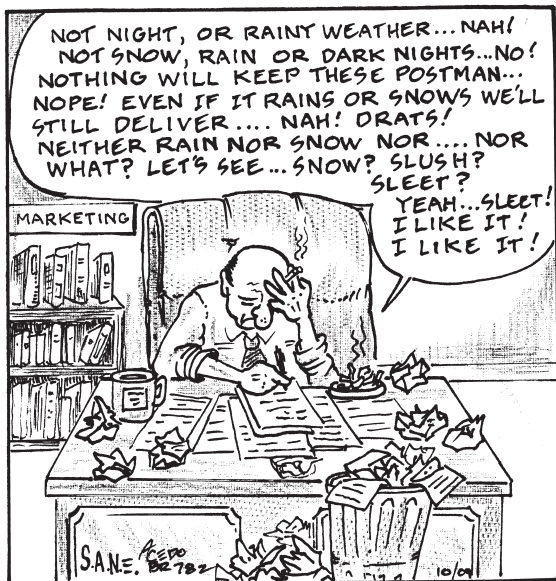
Now consider the number of e-mails sent by Postal Service management and by our Union officers...*each* day! Each week! Each year! Take away the multi-million \$ spent on—oh, I don’t know—two-pass, DPS, Flat Sorters... and pretty soon you are looking at some serious cash. Perhaps it would be a good idea for our own company to make it a practice to USE OUR OWN PRODUCTS rather than sending e-mails!!!!

We should all agree not to send e-mail except in emergency situations. That one agreement alone would help tip the scales back in our favor, or we wouldn’t have to worry about making that payment to the Internet provider on our way home after losing our jobs.

### Let’s look at ways to improve our market share.

Rather than two-pass, DPS and Flat sorters, money could be better spent on promoting our services, better advertising, and new ideas to take business away





from our competitors—those same competitors who today are trying to put us out of business.

I daily hear on the radio an ad for UPS Stores stating they have the ability to provide customers with a “Mailbox” in their UPS Stores with “a specific street address” they can have their mail sent to. UPS has used the rules in their favor. They cannot deliver First-class mail, but nothing says they cannot hold it for someone to pick up!

Recently, UPS Stores stated in their ads that customers will be notified by email when their parcel arrives at the UPS Store! Holy toilet paper, Batman! Why didn't **WE** think of that!??

In the convenience store industry, customers are willing to pay a little more cash for the convenience of popping in and out for milk, bread and cigarettes. However, convenience stores are now hurting because technology allows the customer to pay at the pump with a credit card. So many drive-offs (stealing gasoline) occurred over the years that owners thought that making customers pay at the pump was a good idea. When it caught on though, customers stopped going inside to spend extra money for milk, bread and cigarettes. Can you say backfire?

The same thing has happened at

the Postal Service. Management believes that simply charging more for First-class mail, along with raising other prices, will bring in more money. Sure, if mail volume remained steady raising prices would bring in more money. *But* higher prices minus lower volume equals less revenue.

After all, you can raise prices on buggy whips from 42 cents to 44 cents, but if no one is buying buggy whips you have made nothing... We cannot survive by simply raising prices on First-class mail! We must diversify?

### What do we need? We need ideas.

Try this one for size. The USPS could have a Stamp Holiday during a 2-week period of time selling Forever stamps at a reduced rate. Not at 43 cents instead of 44, but a huge discount to cause residents and businesses buy up a ton of them.

What would that do? Bring in much needed revenue, for one thing. And since they bought them, they would use them, increasing mail volume which gets them back in the habit of mailing rather than e-mailing.

We want more of that parcel business? Send out competent Customer Connect representatives to obtain the sales for the leads generated. Management sends out some pretty pathetic managers whose people skills are not the best. After all, these same people cannot run a workroom floor, so how could they ever hope to sell a lead?

The entire Customer Connect program should be run and followed up by competent, skilled Letter Carriers with good people skills. And then the Postal Service should follow up with exactly what they say they can do once the sale has been made.

**If you can't beat them, join them.**

During the Napoleonic Wars in the early 1800's, France was attempting to take Moscow. After a long siege lasting many months, Napoleon arrived and asked his Generals what they were doing. His Generals responded that they were going to take Moscow. Napoleon's reply was, “If you are going to take Moscow, TAKE MOSCOW!”

The point is if you are going to be in business, **BE IN BUSINESS!** When markets change, change with them. We don't sell buggy whips, we are a communications industry. For goodness sakes, if people are using e-mail let's find a way to profit from it.

We could offer a Post Office Internet Service and be an Internet provider. We have the resources available to provide unlimited service for \$5.99 a month and make a profit. Again, diversification is a key to making money.

Finally, we may not be a part of the government but we *are* a part of the government. So let's be clear on this concept. We—the government—can afford to bail out insurance companies, automobile companies, banks and hand out money for Cash For Clunkers to the tune of a Trillion or so dollars...but we can't keep the Postal Service alive for a couple of Billion???

### We don't need five day delivery.

**IF ANYTHING.  
WE SHOULD BE GOING  
TO SEVEN DAY DELIVERY!**

Drive down Independence Drive any day after 5:30. The Post Office at Centennial Station is closed. Drive further down Independence Drive to UPS, and further to the other end of Independence Drive to FedEx. **They** have customers waiting in line to mail and to pick up parcels!!! Where are we? Closed...

Thank God we aren't NASA. We'd still be trying to get to the Moon!

The author is an NALC Shop Steward at Gabriel Station in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The article was originally published in the Branch 116 *Summit City Mailbag*.

## Where:

### Southwest Lanes

3610 Wible Rd.  
Bakersfield, CA 93309  
661.834.2695

## When:

### March 7th, 2010

Sunday • 12-3 pm  
(Check-in 11:30 am)

## Cost:

### \$100.00 per team

(25.00 per person)  
Includes 3 games, shoes and PIZZA  
661.834.2695



Get your shoes, get your back stretched and your competitiveness spirit ready. Join our Fourth Annual Bowling Extravaganza. Team up with your co-workers at your station and get a shot at having bragging rights on what station truly has the best carriers. Remember to pick a name for your team! You will need a 4-person team. (men, women, mixed)

**Deadline: February 27th.** 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** - Last year 3 teams were turned away!



## PAST WINNERS

2010 EB Kentucky St. Kids

## Contact:

**Jeff Harrington**

For more info: 378-0975 after 4 pm

Send everything to P.O. Box 30144, Bakersfield, CA 93385

# "OUT THERE"

OUT THERE



OUT THERE

By FRED ACEDO



**Have an idea  
for a cartoon???** \*\*

**Fred Acedo  
BR. 782 S.A.N.E.  
P.O. Box 6532  
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532**

OUT THERE



OUT THERE



**\*\* But—you never know what you might get...**

# Retirement Planning: The 2009 Quiz

By Tammy Flanagan  
National Institute of Transition Planning

*It's hard to believe we're at the end of the first decade of the 21st century—and the end of my fourth year writing this column. As I've done before, I'd like to end the year with a quiz.*

*This year, I'm focusing mostly on key changes that took place during 2009. Let's see how well you do.*

## 1. THE PRIMARY REASON TO CHOOSE A RETIREMENT DATE AT THE END OF THE LEAVE YEAR IS TO ...

- A. Get a full cost-of-living adjustment on your retirement benefit.
- B. Have a full year of your final salary included in your high-three average salary.
- C. Save last year's accumulation of annual leave to be included with your lump-sum payment of accumulated and accrued annual leave.
- D. Avoid coming to work when it snows.
- E. Avoid paying taxes in the first year of retirement.

## 2. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT EMPLOYEES COVERED UNDER THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM IS CORRECT?

- A. They can credit their entire balance of unused sick leave toward their basic retirement benefit.
- B. They will be paid for their unused balance of sick leave when they retire from federal service.
- C. They will receive credit for 50 percent of their unused balance of sick leave toward their basic retirement benefit computation for retirements that occur between Oct. 28, 2009, and Dec. 31, 2013. After 2013, the entire sick leave balance can be used to increase the FERS basic benefit.
- D. Congress is still debating whether to give FERS employees credit for their unused sick leave.

## 3. ONE MONTH OF SERVICE IS EQUIVALENT TO

**ABOUT 174 HOURS OF UNUSED SICK LEAVE. IF A FERS EMPLOYEE WILL RECEIVE CREDIT FOR ONE MONTH OF SICK LEAVE, THIS WILL INCREASE HIS OR HER RETIREMENT BASED ON WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING COMPUTATIONS:**

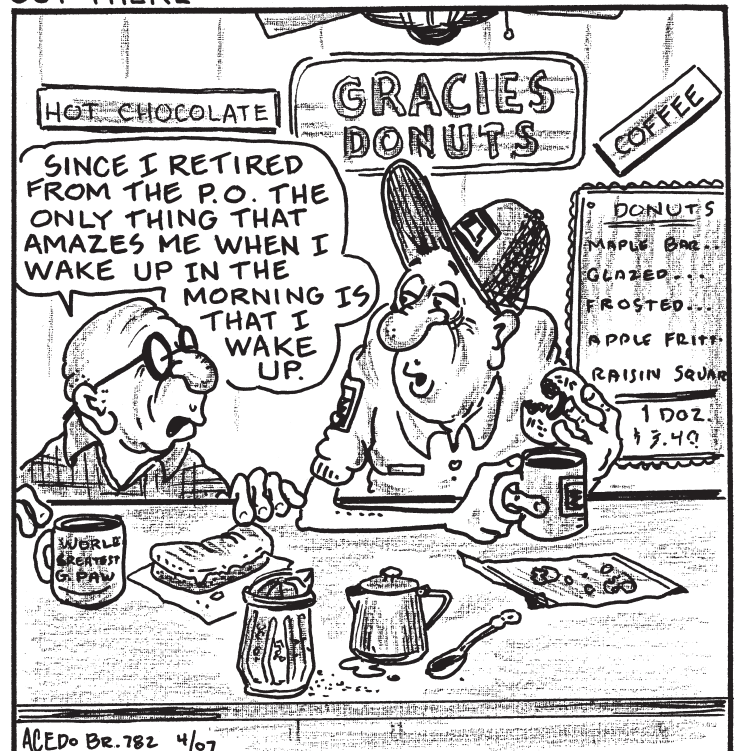
- A. 1 percent times high-three average salary
- B. 1/12 of 1 percent times high-three average salary
- C. 1/12 of 2 percent times high-three average salary
- D. 1/12 of 1 percent times final pay rate

## 4. EMPLOYEES UNDER THE CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM WHO SWITCH THEIR SCHEDULES FROM FULL TIME TO PART TIME WILL HAVE THEIR HIGH-THREE AVERAGE SALARY COMPUTED ...

- A. Using their actual part-time pay rates
- B. Using the full-time equivalent of their salary rate
- C. Using their salary rates prior to 4/7/86
- D. Using their salary rates in effect prior to switching to a part-time appointment

## 5. FERS EMPLOYEES WHO HAD A BREAK IN SERVICE AND TOOK A REFUND OF THEIR RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS CAN NOW ...

OUT THERE



A. Include the refunded service in their length of service for retirement eligibility and computation of their basic retirement benefit.

B. Pay the refunded contributions back to the retirement fund with interest to allow full credit for the period of service covered by the refund.

C. Whistle Dixie.

D. Take a slight reduction in their retirement benefit because of the refunded service.

**6. IN THEIR PAYMENTS RECEIVED ON JAN. 1, 2010, CSRS AND FERS RETIREES WILL RECEIVE A COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT TO THEIR RETIREMENT BENEFITS OF HOW MUCH?**

A. 5.8 percent

B. 2.0 percent

C. 0 percent

D. 12 percent

**7. THE MAXIMUM TAX DEFERRAL AMOUNT FOR 2009 THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN CONTRIBUTIONS IS \$16,500, PLUS AN ADDITIONAL \$5,500 FOR EMPLOYEES WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO MAKE CATCH-UP CONTRIBUTIONS. THE AMOUNT FOR 2010 WILL BE:**

A. The same

B. Lower because of deflation

C. Higher

**8. NEW HIRES WILL HAVE TSP CONTRIBUTIONS AUTOMATICALLY WITHHELD FROM THEIR PAY BEGINNING IN SPRING 2010 IN THE AMOUNT OF:**

A. 10 percent

B. 5 percent

C. 3 percent

D. Nothing. It's up to the employee to choose to participate.

**9. A TSP ACCOUNT INHERITED BY A SPOUSE HAS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE SPOUSE'S OWN INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ARRANGEMENT OR CASHED OUT. UNDER NEW LEGISLATION THAT WILL TAKE EFFECT IN SPRING 2010, TSP ACCOUNTS INHERITED BY THE SPOUSE WILL ...**

A. Become taxable immediately.

B. Be able to remain in the TSP and be renamed in the surviving spouse's name.

C. Be donated to charity.

D. Be passed on to the dependent children and bypass the spouse.

**10. TRUE OR FALSE: BEGINNING IN 2010, THE TSP WILL HAVE A ROTH 401(K) AVAILABLE FOR EMPLOYEES TO CONTRIBUTE AFTER-TAX DOLLARS THAT WILL GROW TAX-FREE.**

## Retirement Planning 2009 Quiz Answers

1. C. Retiring at the end of the year allows an employee to save up their last year of annual leave accrual and be paid for up to 208 hours (eight hours per leave period times 26 leave periods) in addition to the leave carried over from the previous year. The lump-sum payment is usually paid within six weeks of retirement, which would be in the tax year following the last year of employment. The payment also will reflect any pay increase that is granted to all employees in the new year.

2. C.

3. B. Remember that until 2014 it will take about 348 hours of sick leave to equal one month, since currently only 50 percent of the hours are creditable. Also remember that unused sick leave credit will be added to the leftover days in the service computation.

4. B.

5. B.

6. C.

7. A.

8. C. Federal agencies most likely will implement this new procedure in spring 2010, although an exact date has not yet been determined.

9. B.

10. False. This feature will require substantial modifications to human resources and payroll systems, as well as to the TSP's communications, record-keeping, and accounting systems. So it won't be available until sometime in 2011.

Article courtesy of the Cedar Rapids, IA January 2010 NALC Branch 373 Parlor City News.

*I am so ecstatic to say that we ALL did a great job as a whole.*

*We lost a combined total of 809 pounds in the first month. WOW!*

# Brundage Biggest Loser: Couples!!!



Talking to them, Jeff had said, "I have no secrets, I stopped eating out at fast foods (which I did 3 times a day), I bring my lunch and exercise twice a day (4am/evening), trying to intake only 1300 calories a day. Just burning more calories than taking it in, that's the only way to do it. The other motivator is not letting my partner down. Losing the weight is the goal, winning the money is only the icing on the cake."

Laura says, "I am just staying off the couch, walking as much as I can and watching what I eat. The other motivator for me is having a son in college. Any extra money helps out." She also wanted to add, "I am very, very proud of my partner. He is sticking to it and I am so glad to have him as a partner."

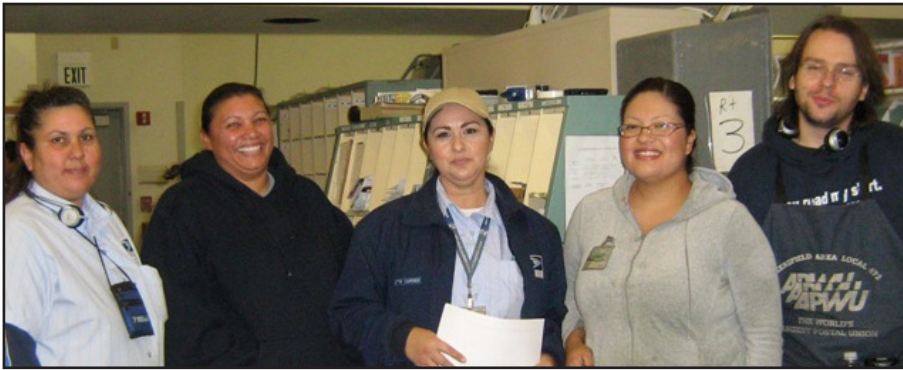
The runner up team was very, very close behind with an amazing 9.90 %. That is only .65 % (not even a percent behind), which goes to Brundage Bulldogs, Maria Gutierrez and Vicki Guerrero.

I was shocked to learn that one team had lost a total of 52 pounds! This made them the winners for the first month's \$50 prize. **THE WINNER'S WERE FROM DOLE COURT STATION: LAURA GORDON AND JEFF HONOR. THEY LOST A TOTAL 10.55 % WEIGHT LOSS AS A TEAM!!**

It is a fierce competition. Everyone, stick with it. Only YOU can make the change for yourself!

People have wondered and have asked me many questions since the competition started. Okay, what were some of those questions? And, more importantly, what are my answers...





Before the competition started, I told all the stations that it would be best if they got a scale that had the decimal. *It could* come down to the nitty gritty. And now— seeing that there was less than a percentage difference in the first month...

### ***How I look at it:***

There are only going to be two team winners at the end, 1st and 2nd place: 75/25 split. We already will have 5 team winners throughout the competition, 1st month, 2nd month, 3rd month; and, 1st and 2nd place winners. BUT if there is a tie, I feel that the pot should be combined and divided evenly to 2 teams (4 people).

What if the scale at the post office is off from another, like at home or the gym? What if winners are caught “cheating”? What if there is a tie?

Well, let me try and answer those questions.

### **About the scales:**

We all know that all scales are different, even depending on the time of day, your weight will fluctuate. That is why one of the rules was to pick a station and use their same scale throughout the competition.

### **Getting caught “cheating”:**

Well, that is hard to say. Let’s first identify “cheating”. As we are mimicking the series, “Biggest Loser”, they are losing weight by working out HARD and eating right. That IS the only way to do it *and* the honest way to do it. Let me re-iterate from all my previous articles. No miracle pills, no surgeries, no crazy schemes (example: Hollywood Diet drink where you lose 10 pounds in 2 days, especially right before a weigh-in). This competition has become the biggest pot since I started it. I do not want to jeopardize what was suppose to be a motivational tool (MONEY) to help people get on the right track and lose weight to end up being a die hard competition just to win money. For everyone’s sake, please keep it honest. I do not want to end up having an argument at the end of the competition, having people say it wasn’t fair, it was rigged, it was ????????

Just like any competition, if there are people who get caught “cheating” they get disqualified. Please! We are all grown adults who know what needs to get done to lose weight, the right and honest way. This is just not “MY” competition, this is OURS! Everyone put in \$25. Twenty-five dollars being taken from you is not much of a loss, but to know that someone else won a huge amount by not being honest IS a big deal.

### **About a tie:**

That’s my thought.

FYI: Team winners are determined by the most percentage weight loss of each month, not combined. The final prize is the over-all combined weight loss for the *entire* competition.

As I stated, I started this but it is not “MY” competition. Feedback is always welcomed, especially if it’s to make the competition bigger and better in the future. I already have people interested in starting another one after this one ends.

Please, for the sake of a good thing all around, keep it honest.

MABEL BULLIS  
Brundage Steward

### **OUT THERE**



# What is the NALC Mutual Benefit Association???



The NALC established the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) at its 1891 Convention in Detroit, Michigan. The MBA offered life and other kinds of insurance to help protect Letter Carriers and their families. One year after the 1891 convention, the State of Tennessee granted a charter to the MBA to operate as the NSBA.

In its early years, the MBA offered a simple death benefit policy which Letter Carriers could purchase for a modest price.

This was an extremely important feature of the MBA, since the federal government did not provide death benefits for postal employees, often leaving a Carrier's family without any income protection.

Prompted by this grim fact, the National Ladies Auxiliary (an increasingly influential association of women from Letter Carriers' families) began urging members to purchase life insurance from the MBA. At the same time, branch "collectors" (forerunners of today's MBA representatives) went to work signing up other NALC members for MBA protection.

Most of the large NALC Branches had already set up their own sick benefit plans. In 1905, members in attendance at the National Convention in Portland, Oregon voted to expand the role of the MBA to include the "National Sick Benefit Association" (NSBA). The MBA was organized primarily for members in smaller Branches.

At the time of inception, premiums for NSBA insurance were between fifty and eighty cents per month and benefits averaged \$8 per week for up to 20 weeks.

In 1953, the administrative offices of the MBA moved from Nashville, TN to 100 Indiana Avenue in Washington, DC to establish a permanent headquarters along with the NALC. Two years later, the Insurance Department of the State of Tennessee also permitted MBA/ NSBA to begin writing accident, health, and hospitalization coverage.

This decision ultimately led to greater authority for NSBA, and to the birth of NALC's Health Benefit Plan as it is known today. Every NALC member should know that the NALC Health Benefit Plan is the very first health insurance plan which was created for any federal employees.

MBA's continued success in the '50s, '60s, '70s and beyond stemming largely from the efforts of its "collectors"—local Branch members who collected money from members to pay the premiums on their MBA policies. In 1977, the MBA redefined the role of the MBA Representative from one of collector to one of liaison between Branch members and MBA's home office.

In 1905, members in attendance at the National Convention in Portland, Oregon, voted to expand the role of the MBA to include the National Sick Benefit Association (NSBA). The NALC could

now provide sick benefits to Letter Carriers who found themselves out of work due to an accident or illness.

Now, there are over 400 MBA Representatives located in branches all over the country. MBA currently offers a variety of insurance programs tailored to Letter Carriers as well as an annuity program.

Today...  
MBA continues strong year after strong year. Total assets continue to increase over previous years by millions of dollars, and surplus increases by hundreds of thousands. Despite the stock market decline, MBA was continuing to outperform other life insurance companies, just as it had done for more than 100 years.

Today, the MBA has over \$267 million of life insurance in force and can claim over \$176 million of admitted assets. The organization continues to serve Letter Carriers and their families nationwide—not only by providing insurance protection, but through other activities as well. Thanks to the unfailing support of its members and the expert guidance of its Board of Trustees, MBA can easily look forward to another 100 years of success.

For more information, visit [NALC.ORG](http://NALC.ORG) and click on departments, Mutual Benefit Association.

# 2010 NALC HBP Info



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
*** Mental & Substance Precert.	1-877-468-1016
Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Hearing Impaired	1-800-238-1217
*** CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
*** Durable Medical Eqpt.	1-888-636-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
Nurse Assistant (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
***CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quest Diagnostics (Lab Services)	1-877-220-6252
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-784-8797
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
**** Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213

**Mark Ramirez**  
**(661) 834-5011**

**Branch 782 MBA & HBR Representative**

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

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

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

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

**Conentra Urgent Care**  
9500 Stockdale Highway Suite 100  
Bakersfield, CA (661) 282-4900

**Sendas Northwest Urgent Care**  
3409 Calloway Drive Suite 101  
Bakersfield, CA (661) 587-2500

**PPO Lab: Quest Diagnostics**  
2001 17th St  
Bakersfield, CA (661) 631-8514

\* Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by the Plan. Must notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates. \*\* Mail order drug prescription program long term (maintenance drugs) 60 day supply: \$8 generic, \$43 name brand; 90 day supply: \$5 NALC select generic, 12 generic, \$65 name brand. Preferred Retail Pharmacy, 20% generic, name brand 30%. MEDICARE 60 day supply: \$7 generic, \$37 name brand; 90 day supply: \$4 NALC Select Generic, \$10 generic, \$55 name brand. Prior approval required for some drugs. Certain bio-tech drugs (e.g. Asthma, Diabetes, organ rejection) require prior approval before dispensing. Must call the Plan. **1-800-237-2767.**

## Preferred Provider (PPO)

**Cost: \$15.00**

**Co-pay per office visit**

## Preferred Provider (PPO)

**Deductible**

**\$300 Individual**

**\$600 Self & Family**

**Per Calendar Year**

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

from the  
**editor-guy**

Paul Trombetta died recently. I never worked with Paul, but I recall that he retired sometime during the late 1980's. In the newspaper, there was just a very brief notice of his passing. There were no services and there wasn't an opportunity to pay any respects.

Since he had maintained his membership in our Branch, I felt that it was only right that I let you know. It is a matter of respect.

As I write, I usually think about who might take the time to read what I write. Right now, I just thought of Candy Abelia. He is a Retiree who has moved out of Bakersfield. As a result, he may not know that Paul passed away.

If he reads this, he'll know.

I want to thank Bill Curtis for providing a copy of the obituary notice about services for Tom Riley. When I first met Tom, he was the Brundage Shop Steward (back when Brundage was housed in that tiny, tiny little building). I think it's been some 12 years since he retired.

Co-workers, in each of our units, are sometimes faced with the death of loved ones. South Station's John Rosso recently lost his mother. Tommy Herrera's father, who lived in Tehachapi, also passed away.

When each of us copes with these types of "life events" we do what we have to do. We take care of arrangements, we deal with all of the family dynamics, and we grieve for our loss. And we know that this is something that everyone has to go through sooner or later. Passing is just a part of living.

Having supportive friends and neighbors is an important aspect of making it through. Knowing that those people you see every day at work also care and share your loss makes the burden a little lighter. And, you know what? The sun is going to rise the next day and life will go on.

Taking the notion of "passing" in a different direction, I want to make sure that I note the fact that my assistant editor, Jason Munoz, has resigned. Thankfully, he gave me some notice and said that he would tell me later what brought him to this decision. He also said that he was going to remain active and that I would probably still see him at the folding and stapling.

I really do appreciate everything that Jason did during his stint as the assistant editor. He always seemed to provide extra help by "allowing" his kids to participate in his work on behalf of the Branch. I had an Acedo cartoon that I was going to use in conjunction with giving him my thanks—but in light of the information on the rest of the page—I'll wait until later...

BASIL R. ZUNIGA



**Thomas Riley Jr.**  
1938 - 2010  
A Funeral Service for Thomas Riley Jr., 71, of Bakersfield, CA will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2010, at Cain Memorial A.M.E. Church, 630 California Avenue, at 10:00 a.m. An interment is to follow at Hillcrest Memorial Park. A pre-service viewing is scheduled for Saturday, January 30th, at 9:00 a.m., prior to the services. A viewing is scheduled on Friday, January 29, 2010, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., with a meditation scheduled from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m., in the chapel of Beloved Care, 115 18th Street, Bakersfield, CA. For additional service information please call (661) 631-2825.  
**Services Entrusted to:**  
**Beloved Care Funeral Services**  
[www.bakersfield.com/obits](http://www.bakersfield.com/obits)

*To my friends at  
South Station*

*Thank you for your thoughts and prayers during this time of sorrow for our family loss.*

*Your kindness was greatly appreciated.*

*Sincerely,*

*TOMMY HERRERA AND FAMILY*



# Branch Officers

*E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE* is published monthly by Merged Branch 782 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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www.782nalc.com

Rick Plummer

webmaster@www.782nalc.com

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**Vice-President**  
**Recording Secretary**  
**Treasurer**  
**Financial Secretary**  
**HBP & MBA**  
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**Lucinda Martinez** (661) 327-2898  
**Bill Curtis** (661) 323-1107  
**Danny Blair** (661) 397-8107

## NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

Avenal (93203)	Vacant
Arvin (93209)	John Ortega (661) 809-8140
Delano (93215)	Jerry Patterson (661) 599-6859
Lamont (93241)	Darryl Holderman (661) 589-1683
McFarland (93250)	Robert Campos (661) 805-1034
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer (661) 619-1465
Taft (93268)	Mike Meza (805) 625-4541
Alternate	Debra McClain
Wasco (93280)	Mabel Lyons (661) 900-8892
Downtown Station (93301)	Kim Gerdes (661) 834-2059
South Station (93304)	Darryl Holderman (661) 589-1683
South Station Alternate	Bonita Lewis (661) 589-1683
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar (661) 327-7637
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Pam Smith (661) 979-5854
Brundage Station (93307)	Mabel Bullis (661) 496-5679
Brundage Station Alternate	Emma Gonzalez (661) 834-8658
Dole Court (93308)	Mike Towery (661) 862-8033
Dole Court Alternate	Teresa Ortega (661) 201-3086
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson (661) 345-0256
Stockdale Station (93309)	John Ortega (661) 809-8140
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza (805) 625-4541
Camino Media Alternate	Gina Garcia (661) 809-8016
Mojave (93501)	Vacant
California City (93504)	Paula Hogg (760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93526)	Larry Beem (661) 949-2280
Tehachapi (93561)	Mary Morphis (661) 822-6614
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Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg (760) 373-8963
Ridgecrest (93555)	Lynnell Howell (760) 371-1039



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OUT THERE



**From its earliest years...the NALC pioneered programs for mutual support and welfare to complement its struggles for improved working conditions. The NALC established the Mutual Benefit Association at its 1891 convention in Detroit. The MBA offered Life and other kinds of insurance to help protect Letter Carriers and their families. While speaking at NALC's 1891 National Convention in Detroit, MBA's founding fathers reaffirmed NALC's fundamental goal of uniting for the benefit of NALC members and their families.**

For more info, look at what's on page 8...

**Come to the General Membership Meeting on Tuesday February 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.**

NALC Branch 782 Office: 2628 F Street, Bakersfield, California 93301