

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

# E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN  
CALIFORNIA CITY  
McFARLAND  
TAFT

AVENAL  
DELANO  
MOJAVE  
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST  
TRONA

BORON  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
WASCO

**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901**



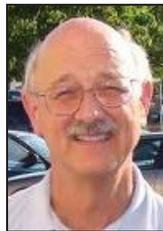
NUMBER 2

Web Version

FEBRUARY 2015

at the

# Mike:



Duluth, Minnesota NALC  
Branch 114 President  
Scott Dulas shared  
some eloquent thoughts  
in his message "From  
the President" in the  
*Zenith Branch News*.  
You should give them  
some consideration...

"Some people in management, non-member Letter Carriers—  
*AND EVEN SOME NALC MEMBERS*—believe that the NALC  
has a magic crystal ball and a magic wand. ***WE DO NOT!***

We do not have any interest in following people around to make  
sure they are doing things correctly. It is management who has  
GPS monitors on Letter Carriers, and it is management who  
follows Carriers.

***I wish we COULD make management do their job correctly!***

The only thing we can do is to talk to them, try to use logic and  
file grievances.

We only know when to file a grievance on a Contract violation  
or when discipline is issued when we are told by somebody or we  
see the situation. We rely on *YOU* to tell us. We can't see every-  
thing or know everything.

NALC officers and Stewards often attend meetings or other  
functions off the clock, with little or no reimbursement, and we  
may not be on the workroom floor each and every instance when  
something happens. This is not a complaint. It is only to say that  
we can't be in two places at once.

***THE NALC HAS NO MAGICAL FIXES.***

We enforce the NALC-USPS Contract. The Contract is no secret.  
We provide a local contract to all Letter Carriers, which they  
hopefully read and keep handy for reference. We even provide a

*Continued on next page...*

copy to management, because they negotiated and signed off on the local contract!

The national Contract is on-line at: [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

The NALC has no reason to keep the Contract a secret. Just the opposite, we wish **EVERY** Letter Carrier and supervisor knew the Contract and complied with it!

We try to educate both management and Letter Carriers every chance we get. Life would be much easier if *everybody* followed the rules. We would love to *NOT* have to file grievances.

We all know that it is not a perfect world. But when management blatantly refuses to obey the Contract signed by both parties, then we have grievances. When management really digs in their heels, or somebody at the District

level decides to make up new rules, then we have *LOTS* of grievances.

With your support, we *can* protect Letter Carriers and the Contract. When management continues to violate the Contract, we can and do escalate the remedy of the grievance—to try to make management comply.

If you do find a working crystal ball, magic wand, genie lamp, or flying carpet and feel generous, the Branch office would willingly accept the donation! Until we receive any of these magic items, the only

things that will insure Contract compliance are: education, good communication and hard work.

**THE  
STRENGTH  
OF THE  
NALC IS  
THE  
SUPPORT  
OF THE  
EDUCATED  
LETTER  
CARRIERS.**

## OUT THERE



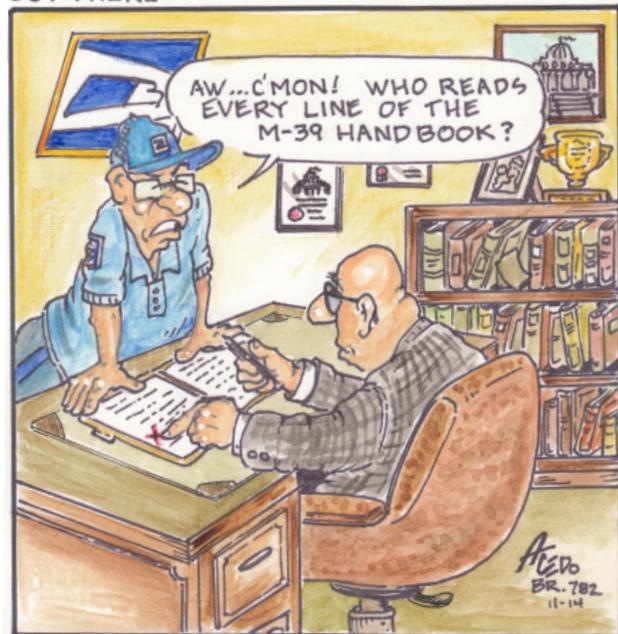
Maybe the next time a supervisor tells you this: 'Manage your mail to make eight hours.' or 'Manage your mail to be back by five.', ask them to sign their paycheck over to you!!!

Say to them: 'If I deliver mail all day and *YOU ARE TELLING ME TO MANAGE*, what are *YOU* going to do?'

Tell them, '*MY* job is to deliver the mail safely and to the correct address. *You* are management. It is *YOUR* job to manage.' Only management can decide to curtail mail and issue PS form 1571s (Report of Undelivered Mail).

If they have a problem with that, or with your estimate of how long it is going to take you, tell them to get out of their comfy warm chairs and grab their coat to walk with you."

## OUT THERE



# Johnny on the Spot



## “Weingarten Rights” turns 40! The story of Leura Collins...

Short of the “Right to Organize” and join a union, there are few Rights more sacred to the labor movement than the Right to have union representation during an interrogation. Known as “Weingarten Rights”, these Rights have protected millions of workers in the U.S. from harsh interrogations, coerced confessions or written statements and even legally binding promissory notes.

For *every* Right won, there is a story of a person who took a stand against injustice. Weingarten is no different...

Leura Collins was a sales clerk at Weingarten Supermarket. Originally founded in 1948, Weingarten expanded its operations to 100 stores by 1972, some of which included “lunch counters,” others included “lobby food operations.” These counters/lobbies provided eat-in or carry-out dining options for customers.

Between 1961-1970, Collins was employed at the lunch counter at Weingarten Store #2. As per the Contract, she had often taken advantage of a free daily meal offered to all employees who worked the lunch counter.

In 1970, Collins was transferred to store # 98 in Houston, where she worked in lobby food operations. She worked at the new store for two years, when, in June 1972, she fell under sus-

picion of taking money from the cash register. Weingarten sent in a loss prevention specialist (LPS) by the name of “Hardy” to investigate the claims. He observed Collins for two days and determined that she was not taking money. Hardy identified himself to the store manager and reported his findings. During the conversation, the store manager informed the LPS that another allegation was made against Collins, alleging that she purchased chicken in a box that was marked at \$2.98 but had paid only \$1. Collins was questioned by the LPS and store manager regarding this new charge.

Leura Collins *repeatedly* asked throughout the interrogation for her union representative or Shop Steward. *Each* time the request was denied. She explained to the LPS and store manager that she purchased four pieces of chicken for which the price was \$1, but that because the lobby department was out of the small-size boxes she put the chicken into the larger box normally used for packaging larger quantities. The LPS verified her statement with other employees working in the area and apologized to Collins for the inconvenience. Humiliated and angry, Collins began crying. She then proclaimed that the only thing she had ever taken from the store without paying for was the free lunch provided to employees.

After hearing this, the interrogation continued. The LPS’s interpretation of the free lunch policy was that it was available to those employees working at the lunch counter but did not extend to those stores with lobby food operations. Collins *again* requested that her union representative or Shop Steward be present and her request was *again* denied. During the investigation, it became clear that the manager and other employees in the department routinely took lunch without paying. Despite this information, the LPS (Hardy) prepared a statement for Collins to sign—including acknowledgement—that she owed the store approximately \$160 for the lunches she had taken. Collins refused to sign the statement.

The LPS contacted the corporate office regarding the interrogation, but he soon discovered that the employees at the store might not have been informed that lunch was not provided as part of their benefits. The LPS apologized to Collins and told her she was free to go. Despite orders by management not to discuss the matter with anyone, Collins immediately contacted her Union Representative—who then filed an unfair labor practice with the National Labor Relations Board. The case eventually found its way to the **UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT**. The U.S. Supreme Court, in 1975, issued a decision giving union employees the right to have a union representative present during any investigative interview if the employee believes that some kind of disciplinary action will occur as a result.

In June of 1972, Leura Collins had decided to buy some chicken—chicken that she planned to donate, along with a cake, to a church dinner. She had no idea that this decision and that her demands for union representation would take her name (and the name of her employer) all the way to the Supreme Court. Her courage and determination won such important rights for workers that her name should be engraved as one of the most important figures in labor. *The cost of the chicken may have only been one dollar but the rewards have made us ALL the richer!*



**I**n closing, I would like to congratulate Beverly Hollowell on her retirement and as she beomes a member of the elite USPS Letter Carrier “Last Punch Bunch”!!!

JOHN ORTEGA  
NALC Branch 782  
Vice-President

# Minutes of the January 2015 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 27th day of January, 2015 at the Branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, E.B., Edwards, Hillcrest, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was the Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; SANE Fred Acedo; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet; OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the December 16, 2014 meeting were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Applications were received from Meredith Brown, Ravinder Brar and Alyssa Gonzales.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Basil Zuniga reported that the folding was completed quickly by Stockdale Station. Next month will be Camino Media. Basil discussed the web version of the newsletter. Frank Martinez reported that he has not attended a meeting of the Social and Recreation Committee. Molly Biggar reported that there are 1195 books remaining. A discussion was held regarding adding a spouse to the Health Benefit plan, when the spouse loses their job. If the spouse is not added within 30 days, they will have to wait until Open Season.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Mike Towery reported that the committee chair for the Retiree Dinner had to step down for personal reasons. Anyone interested in heading the committee, contact Mike.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** John Ortega will be the union representative on the Route Adjustments team. His management partner will be Manuel Davis. John just returned from training. He reported that the adjustments will be completed using CORE. The zones to be checked are 05, 07, 11 and Ridgecrest.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery shared a report from the *Postal Record* which stated that Bakersfield ranked 28th in the nation for dog bites. Bakersfield had a total of 13 dog bites last year.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman will give her report at the February meeting.

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

Beginning Balance	\$59,247.29
Dues and Income	\$17,140.50
Total Balance	\$76,387.79
Total Expenses	\$11,812.52
Ending Balance	\$64,575.27

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by John Rosso.

The drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Ute Fritz if she had been present.

There were 43 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES



# Non-Member List October 2014\*

## Downtown Station

S. Kirby  
J. Cruz  
D. Zuniga

## South Station

*100% UNION!!!*

## Brundage/E. Bakersfield

D. Kinglee

## Hillcrest

*100% UNION!!!*

## Dole Court

D. Morris  
S. Hancock

## Stockdale

J. Oh  
M. Martinez

## Camino Media

P.S. Dhillon  
C. Rodriguez

The labor movement  
was the principal  
force that trans-  
formed misery  
and despair  
into hope and  
progress.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



@unions4workers



/unions4workers

## Arvin

*100% UNION!!!*

## Avenal

J.A. McColloch

## California City

S. T. Ivory

## Delano

L.A. Campos  
C.V. Quebral  
D. Barreto

## Lamont

*100% UNION!!!*

## Ridgecrest

S. P. Pierce  
G.D. Weaver  
N.S. Travers  
*B. Leroy*

## Shafter

M. D. Voights  
L. M. New

## Taft

*A. Veach*  
B. M. Krier  
K. J. Hughes

## Tehachapi

B.C. DenBeemen  
C.E. Rosales

## Trona

*100% UNION!!!*

## Wasco

*100% UNION!!!*

\*CCA names are  
in italics.



## Hector Ramirez

April 10, 1928 – February 07, 2015

Hector was born in Bakersfield, California.

He attended local schools. Graduated from KCHS. At age 16 he joined the Merchant Marines, and at age 18 he enlisted in the US Navy during WWII.

Hector went to work for the US Postal Department and retired as Postmaster Edison California in 1984. He was preceded in death by son Michael S. Ramirez.

He leaves behind his loving wife of 64 years, Miriam. Surviving son Mark Ramirez, grandson Ryan/Celeste Ramirez, great grandson Alexander, great grand daughter Serena. Grand daughter Dana Garcia, great grandsons Evan and Junior Garcia, and great grand daughter Mia Garcia.



In this July 27, 1972 photo, Hector Ramirez holds the sign as he sits by Letter Carriers Homer Ruiz and Mike Gonzalez.

# With Our Condolences

The members of NALC Branch 782 offer our heart-felt condolences to Hector's son, Mark, and to his family.

Mark Ramirez is a retired Branch 782 member who has been a long serving NALC Health Benefits Representative for many years. He is a Branch Officer and a former Shop Steward.

Mark "grew up" in Hector's family and followed in his Dad's footsteps when he became a Letter Carrier who served out his career in Lamont.

We are all sorry for his loss.

# In Memorium

Fred Acedo read an item in the *Bakersfield Californian* obituaries which reported the fact that a retired Letter Carrier had passed away. Fred remembered Russell Grimes and called Basil Zuniga to make him aware of what had happened. When he told Basil, the response was, “Hmmm...I guess he might have been a little bit before my time.”

It was probably *way before* many of you began this job. Here’s the exact obit language: “...In the 1940’s, Russell was hired by the U.S. Postal Service and he served as a letter carrier until his retirement...”



## Saleem Muslim Omar (Russell Dorsey Grimes, Jr.)

January 25, 1925 – January 19, 2015

Russell Dorsey “Snookie” Grimes, Jr., was born in Bakersfield, to the now deceased Russell and Juanita Grimes, Sr. It was his Dad and Myrtle Grimes “Mama”, who lovingly nurtured and raised Russell Jr., after his mother Juanita’s death.

Russell grew up in Bakersfield attending local schools and graduating from Kern County Union High School in 1944. He married his sweetheart, Narva Lee Thomas, who preceded him in death after 60 years of marriage. Russell was preceded in death by siblings, Dorothy & Johnny Grimes and Elizabeth Jones. He is survived by children; Sameerah Mateen Dunkley (Leroy), Ruscel Reader (Robert, Sr.) and Russell Grimes III (June) and sisters Barbara Grimes, Shirley Phillips, Larcenia Taylor, special sisters, Angela Frazier and Roxanne Harris; 19 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren and one great-great-granddaughter.

In the 1940’s, Russell was hired by the U.S. Postal Service and he served as a letter carrier until his retirement. In the 1980’s, he was honored by the Bakersfield Black Postal Workers as a pioneer and role model in the community. He worked as a newspaper contractor for the Bakersfield Californian for 30 years and he operated a television repair business. In 1950, he became a 32 degree Mason in San Joaquin Lodge #11. As a member of the Nation of Islam- American Muslim Society in America, Russell changed his name to Saleem Muslim Omar in 1977. He was a spiritual teacher and leader, a good listener, great friend. He prayed regularly. Russell had a business acumen and a love for learning that he passed to his family. He loved his family and friends and will be remembered and missed by all.



Viewing was held at St. Peter’s RCCM, 510 E. Brundage Lane, Friday, January 23, 5-7 pm; Saturday, January 24 before services. Services were held at the church on Saturday, January 24, 11 am. In lieu of flowers, books could be donated to the Senior Center Library at 530 4th Street

In fact, before many of you were even born, Russell Grimes was delivering to houses you might deliver to now.

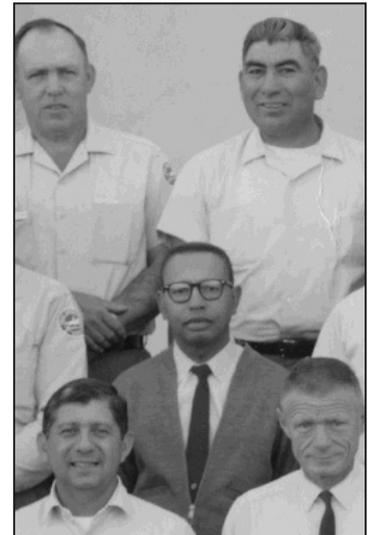
Old neighborhoods with those big old trees—and the homes in need of a lot of care and attention—may well have been brand spanking new when Russell put mail in those door slots...

Like you, he woke up each morning and showed up at a time clock to start his day. He cased mail, pulled it down, and then dealt with the very same type of dogs, customers, weather and issues that you do every day that you come to work!

What did he do?

*“...he served as a letter carrier until his retirement...”*

And now, the members of Branch 782 of the National Association of Letter Carriers make time to pay our respects to him. He walked our walk before we even knew what we would be getting into!



This is a portion of a picture, taken on March 20, 1968. Russell Grimes is in the center. At the upper left is Marshall Eaton and Steve Gomez is next to him. Below Russel are Mike Gonzalez with Bill Myers next to him.

Russel Grimes was not a big man. But, he had a presence that caused others to give him respect. Always, his uniform was meticulously maintained and he took care to present the best public image of what a Letter Carrier should look like.

He was a professional and did things in the most efficient way possible.

There is no record of when Russell Grimes retired. Based on information in the obituary (“In the 1940’s, Russell was hired by the U.S. Postal Service...”), if he served long enough to retire he would have retired sometime in the 1970’s.

Fred Acedo, Mickey Cameron and Homer Ruiz are all retired now and when they began their careers, Russell was probably thinking about retiring.

Fred Acedo began his career in 1961 and he remembered seeing the Carriers loading up their Scooters at the old Carrier Annex at the corner of 16th and “H” Street. Fred shared, “When I was in the Navy I was trained as a dental tech and my job was to make dentures and other dental prostheses. When I got out, I got a job doing the same thing for a company which was in a building right next to the Annex. I remembered seeing Homer Ruiz out there loading his mail. I knew Homer from high school. Speaking of high school, I also went to school with two of Russell’s daughters.”

His memories of Russell centered around the fact that he was very intelligent and that he spoke his mind if someone wasn’t doing the right thing.

Fred also shared that Russell was the person who showed him a very important skill....

“‘Back in the day’ there were no rubber bands to bundle the mail. We used string and also leather straps to tie off multiple bundles. There were wire baskets on the side of the case which held balls of jute. At that time, most of us had knives. After I tied out a bundle, I would use my knife to cut the string. Russell watched me do this and told me that there was a better way. He showed me how to use

the string to cut the string and that it was a lot faster than using the knife.”

Fred went on to share that, “Russell was a ‘no-nonsense’ kind of guy. If you were doing something wrong, he set you straight!”

He also recalled that Russell’s family owned a market in the Cottonwood area and that they were very well respected in the community. He also said that in the the mid-70’s he and his wife, Toni, lived in the same apartment complex with Russell’s son, Russell Grimes III.

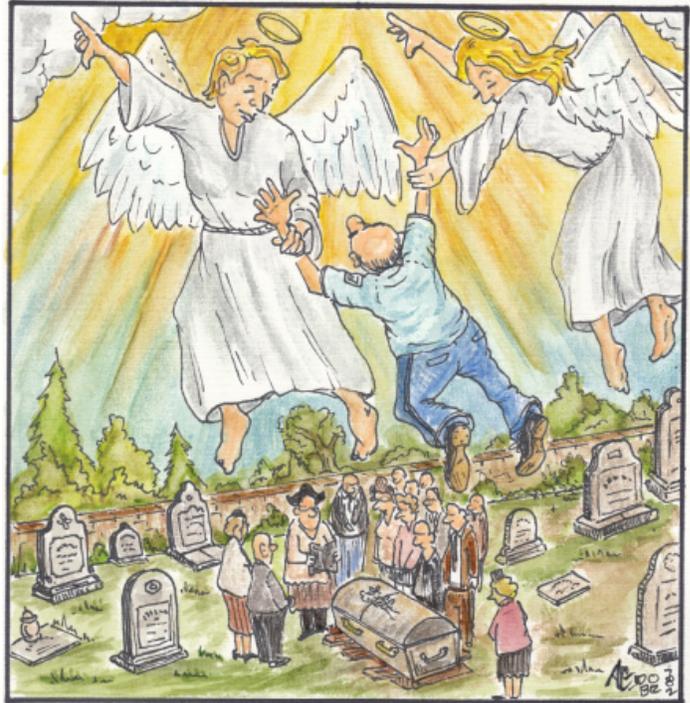
Mickey Cameron, another “Old Timer” also remembered Russell as being quiet... But, when he spoke, his words carried a lot of weight.

Mickey’s career began in 1966 and, like Fred, his introduction to the Postal Service was at the Annex on California Avenue. There — along with Carriers who delivered to what would become the 93301, 93304, and 93309 delivery areas — Russell delivered to the area around 10th and 11th streets close to the Annex.

Although Mickey doesn’t know what conditions were like when Russell started out, he does know what the pay and work conditions were like in the late 1960’s. And, in March 1970, Mickey was out carrying a picket sign as postal employees all over the country went on strike. (**THANK YOU, MICKEY!!!**)

Retiree Homer Ruiz, who started carrying mail in 1960, remembered that Russell was assigned to Route 428 and that his recollection was that he never

## OUT THERE



OLD LETTER CARRIERS NEVER DIE ...  
THEY JUST GET CARRIED AWAY.

heard Russell curse — despite having strong convictions about things that were occurring in the 1960’s.

Homer also laughed when told that Fred Acedo had seen him loading up the Scooter at the old Annex. “Those Scooters were ‘two-bangers’ which had enough room in front to stage cardboard beer boxes which we got from a liquor store. The boxes were about 2 inches high and 24 inches long. The Post Office didn’t supply any trays for the mail. We went on to ‘Mailsters’ which were bigger but presented challenges. I remember, once — in a cul-de-sac — I had to use my foot to keep the Mailster from tipping over as I was making my turn!”

When told that Fred had shared that Russell had shown him how to cut the jute without using a knife, Homer said, “I do remember that we used to do that. I probably learned it from Russell, but that I can’t really remember.”

In closing, “Old Timers” look back at the “good old days” and have good memories. Hopefully, one day, **YOU** will be an Old Timer looking back at your own set of memories which will evoke your own “Good Old Days!”



## from the **editor-guy**

Each month, many articles in NALC newsletters from all over the country “catch” my attention and I wish that I could share them all . However, cost is *the* factor that I have to take into account. Printing your newsletter is a big part of Branch 782’s budget and *that* plays a big part in my decisions on what I can justify “sharing” each month. With that said, our web version only costs me a little of my time... Enjoy!

Let me start this out sharing an article by Fresno Branch 231’s President Richard Najera. Whether you are just starting out your career or you have been “in the business” for twenty years, Richard raises some very important issues that you need to consider...

## President’s Report February 2015

### “When did Letter Carriers lose their way?”

I was asked this question by a retiree a few days after last month’s meeting. I took a long moment to take in what exactly that question might mean. It felt odd to stare back at another person I had known for some time, almost as if I was regarding him as a stranger.

But in those few seconds, I came to the conclusion that he must be talking about the Service itself. After all, when people think USPS, they do not think of the managers at the local level, and certainly not those further up the line. For the most part, they are seen as quite content to sit in the “Ivory Tower” and dictate policy from afar.

The face of the USPS is represented by the craft complement. Clerks, for sure, who work every day at the front counters and the lobbies across the country providing the services that postal patrons have relied upon for so many years; and, certainly most definitely, the Letter Carriers.

I don’t think I need to spell out to everyone who reads our newsletter what the Carrier does as he or she performs the task of mail delivery throughout the day in whatever conditions there may be – inside the office or outside of it. Although there is no official creed or motto of the USPS, most people—including just about every American who doesn’t work for the Service—recall the old (actually very old), heavily paraphrased saying that can be found inscribed at the James Farley Post Office in New York City taken to describe the carrier mission statement. You know the motto, or at least most of it: “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night...” Actually, it is more like an oath, if you really take the meaning of it. But let’s get back to the question posed to me moments ago and keep in mind what I said about the real face of the USPS.

#### “WHEN DID LETTER CARRIERS LOSE THEIR WAY?”

And so, I responded in a rather customary way, I said, “Huh?”

NALC Branch 782 ● 2628 F Street ● Bakersfield, California ● 93301 ● (661) 325-5526

Then of course the mind quickly engaged the mouth and I began to answer something akin to “It isn’t the fault of the Carriers the way the Service is going these days. It’s a lot of different factors.” I started to spell out the whole prefunding issue, again, with the intention of moving into what I feel is “backward budgeting” but then he shook his head slowly, put his hand on my arm and stopped me.

“I mean how did they lose themselves?” He raised his arms up to his sides, a gesture of exasperation. “How did the mailman become less important?”

I asked him if he meant the way the job had “changed” in the several years he had been retired. He nodded, and said that his own Letter Carrier had told him how bad things were in the post office these days, and that management is pushing just about everyone around, including amongst themselves. I confirmed that the workplace had become quite the battleground in some offices, particularly in the Fresno Installation, and attributed it to the usual insensitivity of management to the needs of those who actually deliver the mail. I added that this was compounded by the sheer number of newly hired employees who had never been given more than the mere basics of the job before being sent to the front lines.

But I also added that the Postal Service was now, more than ever, moving toward the corporate mentality that had been its goal so many years before—after postal restructuring had, arguably, finished. He replied that that was old news, and that in his opinion, it came down to one thing and one thing only: “When are Carriers going to remember who really carries the weight? Who really does the work that keeps the managers getting their fat bonuses and everyone getting paychecks?”

I agreed with him, because it is the truth. And it isn’t as though I (and others before me) haven’t presented the same sentiment before, over and over.

Letter Carriers are the face of the USPS, to every single person or business who receives mail. There aren’t too many icons out there more recognizable than that of the USPS letter carrier—that and the mail truck and logo, of course. The truck is merely an instrument to move the delivery platform; the logo gains access to points of delivery and represents the entrusting of the duties to the employee by the employer.

It is the Carrier, though, who actually effects the transaction, delivers the product, fulfills the obligation, meets the demands. That hasn’t changed. What has changed is the inexorable march toward the delivery of mail without the

sense of pride one has in a job well done, because it no longer matters. It seems that it is not if the job is done well, rather how much did it cost to do it?

Autonomy is going away, and I am not going to say that it wasn’t a joint failure this happened. nor can I say that every battle on the workroom floor didn’t have its origin someplace else. In the end, the point of the most heated contention comes down to the bottom line, and whether or not it is being met.

Postal Service employees (and this includes everyone) not just Craft, end up pitting their respective interests against one another rather than trying to improve the working relationship and seeing that working toward a common goal as a team would serve *much* better the interests of the Service rather than fighting over who can be the bigger roadblock to success. Now, before anyone thinks this is an article about how it’s a joint failure that Carriers find themselves in the trend we now see, think again.

When did Carriers lose their way? The answer is simple. When we let management dictate what our day is going to be like. Nowhere does it say you must deliver your assignment at a pace, or a rate, or in any manner that would compromise your health or your safety or cause you undue stress simply to make a number generated from a computer program OR from another person who would attempt to force their relative “experience” and knowledge above your own.

I can understand to some degree, when a new employee comes to work for the USPS, that there will be some “guidance” given by the numbers-driven group. My hope would be that fellow Carriers would ease that transition by telling the new employee what it really is to deliver the mail. Nothing has changed in the daily process of deciding what it will take to get the mail delivered. The Letter Carrier determines this and that is the opinion that matters most during those morning “negotiations”. The key to a successful assessment of the workload is through the use of good judgment, honesty and integrity to determine what it will take to get the job done. And notice!! I didn’t just say the Carriers should espouse these values.

When this can be done successfully, with mutual respect in place, then the face of the USPS—when it goes about performing the core function of what the USPS does—won’t look so unhappy...

Article courtesy of the Fresno, California NALC Branch 231  
*Postmans’s View* published in February 2015.

**W**earing the Postal uniform should mean something to every employee. To me it means customer service. I pride myself in attempting to deliver the mail accurately, going to the door with a smile for packages and accountable mail. When I first became a Letter Carrier I enjoyed delivering the mail and seeing the customers' excited faces when they saw you. For some customers, the Letter Carrier is something they look forward to seeing every day. They know approximately when the regular carrier will arrive, and if you're late they become concerned. Some show their thanks by just telling me to have a good day, or by offering a cold beverage on a hot day, or waiting for you at the box when they see you coming down the street, just to say hello. Sorting the mail is something I could do without, except for the fact that it is the only time you have to converse with your co-workers of many years. Over the years many of my coworkers have retired that had began working prior to my arrival. It is always sad to see someone go who you have known for years, only to see again once a year during our Christmas potluck. I applaud their years with the Post Office and the good service they provided.

So much has changed over the years as far as customer service is concerned. The Postal Service has closed small town Post Offices, closed processing plants, forcing centralized delivery which forces customers to travel to their mailbox rather than walking to the end of their driveway or just opening up their door and reaching into the mailbox from their doorstep. In

***"Management does not seem to care how the mail gets delivered, only that it leaves the office and does not return."***

some small towns customers are now even forced to drive to the next town for customer service, then to only find they are standing in an unacceptable long line due to the Postal Service cutting back on window clerks. The Post Office believes it's better to drop the retired clerks' duties onto the remaining clerks and do the job in the same time frame they were doing it in prior to the clerk retiring.

Now to talk about customer service from the Letter Carrier side. Management does not seem to care how the mail gets delivered, only that it leaves the office and does not return.

Although they have allowed it to be returned and they even scan parcels as attempted when they were not actually attempted. The worst part to me is management knowingly doing nothing about parcels being notified when the carrier never got their butt off the truck seat to attempt it, or that some parcels are being thrown like frisbees into or on the customer's porch from the Postal vehicle. It angers me even more when management does nothing about carriers delivering mail to a locked box just to leave the mail hanging out enough that it falls to the ground before the customer can pick it up. It's really sad when you do your best to make the customer happy, then have others having no pride in wearing the uniform. These days it seems management only cares about the DOIS numbers, what speed you move, because fast is better than accurate, and the MSP scans we are forever being told were not at 100%. Who cares about MSP scans, they mean nothing but to the higher up that came up with the worthless idea. But then they do have to come up with stupid ideas to justify their position and the outrageous money they make. I look at the Post Office in one way, the clerks and the Letter Carriers are what the Post Office is all about, if it were not for us there would be NO customer service. So let's do the job right and be proud in doing it! ■

# Bygone Days of the Postal Service

by Chriss Daniels, NALC Branch 79 Trustee

Article courtesy of the February 2015 *Seventy-Niner* published by Seattle, Washington NALC Branch

# The Needs of the Many...

by Beki Serwach,  
NALC Branch 4374 President



In the Star Trek film, “The Voyage Home” Spock’s mother, who is human (his father is Vulcan) asks him whether he still believes that, by logic, “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few”. Spock replies yes and his mother said, “Then you are here because of a mistake—your friends have given their future to save you.” (The crew had broken the law and had gone on the run in order to rescue Spock.) Spock goes on to say that humans “are sometimes illogical”; to which his mother answers, “They are, indeed!”

In another episode the Enterprise is in imminent danger of destruction when Spock enters a highly radioactive chamber in order to fix the ship’s drive so the crew can escape danger. Spock is dying and, with his final breaths, says to Kirk, “Don’t grieve, Admiral. It is logical. The needs of the many outweigh . . .” Kirk finishes for him, “The needs of the few.” Spock replies, “Or the one.” (I cry at that scene every time)

The phrase “*The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few*” is at the very foundation of our labor union. You may ask; *when* do the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few? As a labor union, we fight for everyone. We fight for those who would otherwise have no voice. Your union gives the average letter carrier a voice in the workplace. Unity is our strength; brotherhood is our backbone.

It’s a balancing act sometimes; but what should a steward do when an issue arises in one of our stations when representing one member could be looked at as though we are making a sacrifice for the greater good of the office? Does that mean we should surrender the rights of one of our members for the greater good? Does that mean that we barter one grievance against another with management? No, we shouldn’t; each grievance must stand on its own merits.

Many of our stewards do just that, they risk the possibility that other carriers, and sometimes other stewards, don’t understand the intricate details of certain grievances or situations, and pass judgment on how it is resolved without knowing all the facts. Facts that may not ever come to light due to the personal nature of some cases. Stewards regularly are giving up time with their families to protect your rights. This is the life of a steward, yet for some reason it is never enough and no matter how hard you try to do the right thing, somebody isn’t going to be happy.

Union stewards and officers face these decisions every day, and sometimes they’re facing a no-win situation. When we’re representing an entire office each individual

member is our responsibility as well as the group as a whole. This can be difficult when the two sides collide and have opposing opinions on how an issue should be resolved. Ultimately, it is the union that has to stand behind the decision that is made and be able to reasonably explain the outcome.

If we take route adjustments for example, and since they’re coming to our stations soon, this is a good example. Some routes are going to be over eight hours, others will be short. The route adjustment team will make adjustments based on carrier input, demonstrated performance, auxiliary assistance, route data inputted by management and other factors. Carriers will be asked to give input as to what portions of their routes they want to lose or what portions of another carriers route they want to gain. The union and management will jointly consider the information and make a decision and, depending on the changes made, it may ultimately make one or more carriers unhappy, right? This can be a no-win situation and is just one of many examples I could give.

It’s when we start fighting amongst ourselves that we give our power over to management. Our union’s strength lies in the ability to have our members try to understand, even if you don’t always agree, that too often your stewards are faced with decisions that best support the language in our contracts and manuals; and that can be difficult when the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

If the “many” are best represented by your unions decision and the “few” or even sometimes the “one” as seen in the route adjustment example above, seem not to matter it is far from the truth. Every member matters, but it is the totality of any given situation; the merits of each individual case, which often times you may never know all the important details, that bring the union to the remedies that are agreed to.

The cases that cannot be decided locally move up to the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT) and then on to an Arbitrator if the DRT cannot reach a resolution. So the process continues until the final remedy is reached. Sometimes, the local parties, union and/or management, or both, are not satisfied with the decision. In all cases we call our National Business Agent Pat Carroll and keep him well informed and seek guidance from him and the RAA’s (Regional Administrative Assistants) throughout the processes.

Ultimately, it is the support of our union brothers and sisters that keep us united. Your belief in our steadfast fight to put the needs of the many before our own personal needs is what keeps us going, because that’s just what we do.

Article courtesy of the January 2015 *Front Lines* published by Center Line, Michigan NALC

# 2015 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
CVS/CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
<b>NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
CVS/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 Organ Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
<b>CIGNA Dental Discount Program</b>	<b>1-877-521-0244</b>
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-333-4636
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
<b>Shared Services (Retirees Info!!!)</b>	<b>1-877-477-3273</b>

**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 85072-2192

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

**NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan and Value Option**  
 P.O. Box 18223  
 Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223  
 Phone: 1-855-511-1893

**CVS Pharmacy**

**Some immunizations may require your doctor call in a prescription.**

**Also, not all CVS pharmacies have "Minute Clinics".**

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

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

*\* 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.*

**OUT THERE**



\*\* 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/45% non-formulary. MAIL ORDER/CVS PRESCRIPTIONS (when NALC is primary): 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand, \$58 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand, \$80 non-formulary; **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary) Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of formulary, 30% non-formulary. MEDICARE PRIMARY (mail order); 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 formulary, \$52 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$10 generic, \$55 formulary, \$70 non-formulary; 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.

Our PPO doctors and facilities—through (OPA Network) CIGNA—save us and the Plan thousands of dollars and it is top notch care at a discount rate. You don't lose anything. You are saving money for the best care!!! For example:  
 \*CIGNA Weight Loss Program (877) 220-6252

**Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782 HBP Rep.**  
**(661) 398-6075**

# Health Prescription: Humor from Mark!

## *I have questions!*

Why isn't the number 11 pronounced "onety-one"?

If 4 out of 5 people SUFFER from diarrhea...**DOES THAT MEAN THAT ONE OUT OF FIVE ENJOYS IT?**

Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?

If people from Poland are called Poles, why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

If a pig loses its voice, is it "disgruntled"?

Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist, but a person who drives a race car is not called a racist?

If it's true that we are here to help others...then what exactly are "the others" here for?

If lawyers are "disbarred" and clergymen "defrocked", then doesn't it follow that electricians can be "delighted", musicians "denoted", cowboys "deranged", models "deposed", tree surgeons "debarked", and dry cleaners "depressed"?

Do Lipton Tea employees take 'coffee breaks'?

What hair color do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?

I thought about how mothers feed their babies with tiny little spoons and forks, so I wondered what do Chinese mothers use. Toothpicks?

Why do they put pictures of criminals up in the Post Office? What are we supposed to do, write to them? Why don't they just put their pictures on the postage stamps so the mailmen can look for them while they deliver the mail?

Is it true that you never really learn to swear until you learn to drive?

If a cow laughed, would milk come out of her nose?

## *Whatever happened to Preparations A through G?*

**WHY, WHY, WHY** do we press harder on the remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?

Why do banks charge a fee due to insufficient funds; when they already know you're broke?

Why is it that when someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe you believe them, but if they tell you there is wet paint you have to touch it to check?

Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard?

Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?

Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Whose cruel idea was it to put an "s" in the word "lisp"?

If people evolved from apes, why are there still apes?

Why is it that, no matter what color bubble bath you use, the bubbles are always white?

Is there ever a day that mattresses are not on sale?

Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?

Why do people run over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it; and, then, put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?

How do those dead bugs get into the enclosed light fixtures?

Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?

*Why, in winter, do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?*

## **And: A FAVORITE:**

The statistics on sanity say that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're OK, then is it *YOU*??????

**REMEMBER**, A day without a smile is like a day without sunshine! And a day without sunshine is, like.....night!!!!

**M**ichael started in April 2014. He has his AA degree and started towards his 4 year degree but didn't have the energy to continue with school. He has always had an indoor job and wanted to try something new which might even be "outdoors". So here he is....a CCA and, to this point, "loving it"!

The heat or the rain has not fazed Michael Lelis one bit, yet. In fact, he was wanting it to snow when it forecast but it didn't. He has an awesome outlook on life and he feels this job is great. "You load up the mail and get out to 'do your own thing' as long as you get the job done." During Christmas time he didn't get done until 9 p.m.—but the job has to get done!



Michael went through a year probation. He says, "It's nothing you never imaged what it was gonna be. It's either sink or swim using your basic common sense." He has had a very colorful experience thus far. Cell phones do not work in Trona.

I guess he is because he is still there".

Trona is known as the "gateway to Death Valley". One day delivering in Trona— 113 degrees outside—**HE DID NOT SEE ONE PERSON ON HIS ROUTE ALL DAY LONG.** "It was the most eerie feeling".

Even going in to deliver to the only "market" in the city, the clerks were in the back so nobody was seen. Isn't that crazy??? Imagine us (delivering in Bakersfield) and not seeing one sole person around! That **WOULD** be EERIE!! And not only that, there's a mineral company in the area that produces lime salt. It has the most distinctive sulphur smell of rotten eggs. Hmmm... Imagine driving through **THAT** every day!

Truly, Carriers like Michael are what we want and need in the Postal Service: Good people, with positive personalities and who are willing to work hard! Keep up the good work, Michael! You are "carrying" on a great Carrier tradition!!!

# A Focus on Our Future: Michael Lelis

MABEL BULLIS  
East Brundage

One day, he got stuck in a ditch at a construction site. They were building a retaining wall and cars had to go "off road" because the roads were not paved. And, he got stuck!

He was 1/2 hour late when he got back to the office. When he got there his supervisor said, "Keep moving. Get going".

In fact, Michael has had issues getting stuck with his truck a couple of times. (We all know that our LLVs are NOT Lexus!) The customers out there were so willing to help "drag" the LLVs out with their tractors, but Michael politely told them that he can't allow them to.

Michelle Eela has helped him a lot with getting used to being a Carrier. She said, "Whatever you hear from Carriers, one day it will happen to you". Her advice to him: "Stay positive. It won't always be so difficult." He is grateful for her kindness and shared experiences.

Michael also wanted to acknowledge Jessica (the clerk in Trona). She is helpful to him when he has to stop by the office to pick up mail. His dad, John Lelis, is an RCA carrier now in Ridgecrest delivering only on Saturdays. Michael loves this job so much but, "I kept telling my dad how hard the work was and how long the hours were and that it was up to him if he was up to the challenge...".



# Field Goal Range

by Dave Caszatt, NALC Branch 2555

Somewhere back in the early eighties, I was given a one hour throw-off that included the thirteen hundred block of Albert Street.

The Regular on the route cautioned me about a certain address where a rather large dog was kept in the garage. The heads-up had to do more with the dog's loud scary bark that caught Carriers off guard than with any possible attack.

And, as it so happened, I was carrying a certified for that address, so I would have to make my way to the front door.

Kind of day-dreaming on that nice Fall day, I still jumped a bit when the Wolfhound I was warned about suddenly leapt up to crash heavily against the inside of the garage door. I calmed down and headed for the front porch. A nice, pleasant lady greeted me along with another, albeit, much smaller pooch.

She insisted that her little "pixie pie" Benji wouldn't hurt anyone and took the pen and cert to another room.

"Benji" with a bad hairdo yapped non-stop, teeth clicking against the screen door while I held it shut with my knee on the outside. When the lady returned, she carefully handed me the receipts through a tiny slit in the door and I hustled out toward Albert Street.

Just as I reached the street, the lady pushed her door wide open and thanked me very much for the good news that came with the letter. I waved and had to hustle to the other side because a couple of cars were coming down the street.

That's when I heard it— the growling yap of a running dog, the screeching of tires! And then instincts just took over...

Seconds later, the lady came hurriedly across the street and picked up her motionless dog that lay next to the curb in the grass. The driver of the first car jumped out apologizing all the way to the distraught pet owner. The second driver got out of her car to see if any damage had been done when she bumped the first car.

The first driver breathed a sigh of relief as he returned to his car. The second driver crossed her arms and mouthed, "*A--hole Mailman!!!!*"

Quite frankly, I was very much relieved. The unfortunate incident felt an awful much like punting a waterlogged football many years before.



The first driver explained that he hadn't felt anything when he hit the dog. *THAT* only made the lady cry. I then knew I had to come clean.

"Ma'am, ma'am! The car didn't hit your dog. I kicked it. I thought it was going to bite me, so I...kicked it. Uh...pretty hard."

"The car didn't hit her?!" "No, ma'am." Just then the little mutt started to stir.

"Oh, thank God! *THANK YOU!* My dog wasn't hit," wept the lady as she headed back to her house.

"I thought I had place-kicked that snarling little gremlin straight through the crossbars of canine heaven!!"

Article courtesy of the Jan-Feb 2015 *Spartan Views* published by East Lansing, Michigan Branch 2555

from the  
**editor-guy**

A similar Fred Acedo cartoon was originally featured in our May 2014 newsletter. After hearing about this article, Fred redrew and colored it because it fit better with the article. Thank you, Dave Caszatt, and, once again, thank you, Fred Acedo!

# 9th Annual Battle of the Stations



**When:** April 12, 2015      **Check-In Time:** 9:00 am      **Start Time:** 10:00 am

**Where:** Southwest Lanes 3610 Wible Road 93309 Phone: 661-834-2695

**Cost:** \$80.00 Per Team (Includes 3 Games + Shoe Rental)

**ENTRY DEADLINE:** April 6<sup>th</sup>

Tournament is open to all **CURRENT and RETIRED POSTAL EMPLOYEES ONLY**

**Raffle Prizes:** Each team will receive 4 raffle tickets at check-in for a chance to win prizes.

**A Special Thank You To The Soc & Rec Committee**

**Battle of the Stations Rules:** Each station will be represented by 3 teams. The station with the highest total pinfalls added up from the 3 teams will be declared the winner. Stations may have more than 3 teams to represent them, **BUT** only the scores of the **TOP 3** high scoring teams from that station will be used. So, rally your station and get as many teams registered to better your chances of winning the trophy, earning a catered breakfast for your station and owning the bragging rights ALL year.

**Last Years Winning Station:** Dole Ct (5,149 Total Pin Fall)

**Catagories:** There will be 3 catagories (Men, Women and Co-Ed). Awards will be presented to the top two teams in each catagory. Top individual Male and Female bowler will also be presented with an award.

**Last Years Top Male:** Antonio Avery      **Last Years Top Female:** Lou Guiterrez

**Lanes Are Limited... FIRST TO PAY, FIRST TO PLAY!!! GOOD LUCK TO ALL!!!!**

**Please Send Entries To:** Ralph Ramirez  
9008 Rockhampton Dr. 93313

**For More Info:** Ralph Ramirez 661-847-9006 after 4 pm  
Roel Alaniz 661-900-2654



I am an assistant in Ms. Barnes's Kindergarten class at Palla Elementary. Every single year—during the month of February—she teaches a unit about mail delivery. The unit is centered around Valentine's Day.

The children bring their Valentine's cards to school in envelopes so they look like letters. She has them place stamps on them. (She even uses one cent stamps!)



Next, they mail the letters in a small blue mail box. The box looks like the ones out on the street. Then, after the letters are mailed, each child gets a turn cancelling the stamp, sorting, delivering, and then receiving the letter.



The best part is when they get to open their mail!!

KELLY BLAIR  
Wife of Branch 782  
member Danny Blair



*After parcel post service was introduced in 1913, at least two children were sent by the service. With stamps attached to their clothing, the children rode with railway and City Carriers to their destination. The Postmaster General quickly issued a regulation forbidding the sending of children in the mail after hearing of those examples...*

Photos courtesy of Smithsonian Institution  
Unidentified Photographer

# What's Slowing You Down?

by Ed Sholkoff, NALC Branch 2008

Is it possible that there is a more stupid place to work than the U.S.P.S? It's hard to say, unless you've worked for every business that there is. It sure would be interesting to work for UPS and Fed Ex for just one day, just to see how their operation functions. I can almost guarantee that it is run far better than ours. But that's not to say that there aren't some post offices around the country that operate pretty good. I've worked in New York, New Hampshire and Florida, and I've had good and bad supervisors at every office. But I think everyone in Clearwater, and especially at Sunset Point office would agree that if they brought in two or three orangutans, the place would probably be run better then how it's currently being run.

You really have to wonder where they get some of the people that are in management. Some of the things they say and do are just amazing! But it's no wonder because some of them have never even carried mail, and here they are trying to tell you how to do your job. The current situation in Clearwater is pretty pathetic. We start late, get our mail late, leave the office late and then we have to move like someone's chasing us so we can make the six o'clock truck. Having to work like this day in and day out is nothing but undue stress and pressure. I myself have a pretty nice route but I can't go out there and enjoy it.

The other day, after having a typical stressful day, when I got back at 5:45, just in time to make the truck, our illustrious station manager told me that I bring all the pressure on myself. Of course the fact that I start late, get my mail late, leave late and have to go all day like I'm a wanted man by the F.B.I. couldn't have anything to do with it. All I can say is, what an idiot. But she's not the only one. She was on vacation recently, and we had a fill in named Allan. It was on a day with marriage mail plus we had lots of political mail and tons of parcels, plus the usual waiting time. He asks for my estimate and I told him six o'clock. He just looked at me and asked what was slowing me down? Need I say more?

It's sad how the post office has gone downhill. It actually used to be a good job. You came in at a decent time, cased up all your mail, checked for forwards, pulled your route down and hit the street, at a decent time. We also used to give people decent service. And as long as you made it back for the truck, and the phone wasn't ringing with upset people, then the bosses were happy. Delivering people's mail at 5 o'clock can't be considered good service. All I know is, in 41million 472 thousand seconds I'll be out of there!

And that's the way I see it.....

Article courtesy of the November 2014 *Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update* published by Tarpon Springs, Florida NALC Branch 2008.



# What you need to know about Scanning...

By Steven Abasta, Branch 24

As I am sure most, if not all carriers know, the Postal Service has the ability to track packages based on the scans utilized as the package travels from the shipper to the customer receiving the package.

In January of 2013, the Postal Service introduced the intelligent mail device, also known as IMD wireless. The IMD's work as a "companion device" to the USPS's current intelligent mail data acquisition system scanner, which provides wireless transmission of data. The IMD wireless will enable the IMD device to transmit product service information, as well as operational data for current programs like managed service points (MSP), collection service points (CPMS), and global positioning system (GPS) data every 15 minutes.

The new system also provides for a migration from the current local intelligent mail server (LIMS) to a web based regional intelligent mail server (RIMS) that will enhance future capability while retaining all of the current LIMS functionality.

While the NALC applauds the Postal Service for getting on board with real time tracking information, there is another use for RIMS and that use is the reason I am bringing it to your attention.

As I read the IMDAS RIMS Phase II User Guide, my attention was drawn to Chapter 4.7 which discusses the Tracking Tab. In a nutshell, the Tracking Tab allows the user to view MSP and wireless status reports and the position of Carriers in near real time. The user has the ability to open the tracking tab which shows a map of whichever route they have entered into the system. This allows them to not only view all of the MSP data for the particular route, but the map shows them real time locations of the IMD Wireless device.

For each route ID where GPS data is available, the MSP report has a link to display, on a map, all the locations where MSP scans were performed. The scan locations will appear as pins on the map. The red pin shows the location of the most recent MSP scan. What this

means is that for every MSP scan you make, a GPS location can be pulled up to identify your actual location when the MSP scan is made.

Chapter 4.7.8 of the IMDAS RIMS phase II User Guide covers Map Route Tracks. The Map Route Tracks feature enables the RIMS user to view the tracks (bread crumbs) and current map location of a single wireless IMD for a day or part of a day. The user may select the wireless IMD tracks to view by Route ID, cell phone Device ID, or Employee ID. This means that if a Supervisor wants to track your location, this feature allows them to view where you are and where you have been based on GPS location. It will also allow them to track your location by the time of day so they will be able to see what your location is at any given time.

Chapter 4.7.10 talks about GPS Locations. The GPS Locations shortcut opens the GPS Locations page. This page displays the most recent GPS data in a searchable table. The records in the table include the following fields:

- Device Event Time
- Posting Time
- Latitude
- Longitude
- Employee ID
- Route ID
- Device ID
- Speed (miles per hour)
- Direction (0-359)
- Distance
- Accuracy
- Location Method (GPS=0)

This gives the Supervisors the ability to enter identifying information about a particular route or carrier to see exactly where this carrier is at any given time. It further allows them to see on a map where you are at any given time.

Now even though this technology was

# AND Tracking!!

designed to allow the Service the ability to track packages in real time so that this information can be provided to the inquiring customer, I can also see that the Service can utilize this information for other purposes. For the most part, they can use this technology to do street supervision sitting in front of a computer screen.

For the carriers that go out each and every day and deliver their routes in a professional manner, this new technology probably means absolutely nothing. However, to the select few that are not performing their duties as they should be this technology should be a concern.

This type of information has already surfaced in several investigative interviews that I have sat in on. A manager now has the ability to see if a carrier has deviated from their assigned route.

They could combine the MSP and GPS data to see whether or not a carrier has expanded their lunch. Although I see many good uses for this technology, I can also see the potential for it being utilized to support disciplinary action.

I share this information with you so that you know what capabilities the Postal Service has to track not only where you are but also for how long you have been in one location. If you are out carrying your route like you are supposed to, then you need not be concerned. If you are doing things you are not supposed to be doing, then you know that the risk of being caught has increased tenfold. Lets not put ourselves in the position to face disciplinary for not doing what we are paid to do. All of the information described above can be viewed by local Management, District Management, Area Management, and Headquarters Management. If a particular office is experiencing higher than usual overtime, rest assured that someone from above will want to know why. Although this has always been the case, they now have the ability to view real time information that they can track to see for themselves what is happening in your office.

Source: Angel City Carrier, Dec 2014

Reprint courtesy of Santa Barbara, California NALC Branch 290 and their Jan - Feb 2015 *Beast of Burden*.

# DELAY TACTICS=BIG DOLLARS



It is often frustrating to employees as well as union representatives that it often takes an extremely long period of time before a grieved issue is ultimately settled. While it is encouraging when the union ultimately wins on an issue, it is important that an understanding of how much work and time is involved in ultimately securing victory - especially when management refuses to be compliant.

For example, on June 18, 2014, Local Business Agent Region 13 Alton R. Branson and USPS Labor Relation Specialist Anita O. Crews signed a pre-arbitration settlement agreement that resulted in a very favorable resolution to the aggrieved employees. However, this pre-arbitration agreement was merely the end of a lengthy series of grievances and appeals involving contract violations during route adjustments at the Twinbrook office.

The original issue concerned route adjustments at the Twinbrook office. The route inspections were conducted during May of 2013. During those inspections, Twinbrook Shop Steward Karim Abdullah identified two contractual violations – improper time disallowances on PS Form 3999, and untimely implementation of route adjustments beyond the 52-day contractual window. Steward Abdullah grieved both issues, with both grievances failing to be settled at the local levels (Informal Step A or Formal Step A) of the grievance procedure. Both grievances advanced to Step B of the grievance procedure. For the purpose of this article, we will follow grievance K11N-4K-C 13272222, the grievance addressing the improper time disallowances.

On September 26, 2013, the Step B Team found management in violation of the contract in regard to time disallowances and instructed management to comply with the contract no later than October 26, 2013. As is often the case, management disregarded the Step B decision, and did not make the proper adjustments to route time disallowances by October 26, 2013. The Step B Team, however, did not agree on the remedy

request made by the union for the violation. The remedy was impassed by the Step B Team to arbitration.

Steward Abdullah then filed a follow-up grievance, citing non-compliance to the original Step B instruction for management to comply no later than October 26, 2013. As was the case with most of the grievances in this case, no settlement was reached at the local level with management refusing to even meet with the union Informal Step A or Formal Step A representatives. This grievance advanced to Step B as well with the Step B Team finding management in violation of the contract for non-compliance. Management was then instructed to comply with the original grievance for errant time deductions no later than January 7, 2014. The remedy request was again impassed to arbitration.

For a second time, management refused to comply with the Step B Team instructions to comply, and yet another grievance was filed, K11N-4K-C 13379047. This grievance also was not settled at the local level, and advanced to Step B, where management was again found in violation of the contract and ordered to comply no later than February 15, 2014 while sending the remedy request to arbitration.

Management again refused to obey with the Step B decision to comply by February 15, 2014, and another grievance for non-compliance was filed. Like the other grievances, this grievance, K11N-4K-C 14118365, went unsettled at the local level and advanced to Step B where the Step B Team found management in contractual violation for non-compliance and ordered management to comply no later than April 12, 2014. The remedy was again impassed.

Unbelievably, management disregarded the Step B decision and did not adjust the routes in Twinbrook properly by the compliance date of April 12, 2014. Yet another grievance was filed, K11N-4K-C 144150308. Again, the grievance advanced to Step B, where management was again found in violation and ordered to comply no later than June 30, 2014. And again, the Step B Team could not agree on a remedy, with the issue impassed to arbitration.

In all, after more than a year of letter carriers working improperly adjusted routes at the Twinbrook office, eight total grievances advancing to Step B of the grievance procedure, and six extensions from Step B for management to comply (all of which were ignored), the impassed issues of remedy finally advanced to arbitration. The issue was settled at the pre-arbitration level, and the decision signed by Local Business Agent Branson and Labor Relation Specialist Crews settled grievance K11N-4K-C 13272222 and all other grievances relating to this issue. Terms of the settlement were as follows:

1. *Each of the twenty-seven (27) carriers assigned to zone 53 in the Twinbrook office at the time of the adjustments will receive a lump sum payment of \$1200.00.*
2. *Pay is to be received by all carriers no later than thirty (30) days from the date of this decision.*
3. *Management agrees to adjust all routes in zone 53 by no later than August 18, 2014.*
4. *If the routes are not adjusted by August 18, 2014, management agrees to pay each carrier \$20.00 per day until the routes are adjusted.*
5. *Management agrees to use the route data from September, October and November of 2013 for the adjustment.*
6. *Management also agrees to pay NALC Branch 3825 a lump sum of \$4000.00 for any and all non-compliance grievances filed on the May 2013 route inspection and adjustments.*
7. *The lump sum payment to the branch is to be received no later than thirty (30) days from the date of this decision.*

In the end, this issue, and the series of grievances it generated, is illustrative of the enormous amount of time and diligence it takes to successfully achieve contractual compliance and compensation when management consciously refuses to be a contractually responsible party. It is important that employees be patient when waiting for settlement of grievances. Sometimes it simply takes a lot of time and effort. Clearly, the system is not perfect, but it is the system we have to work with for now.

Article courtesy of the Volume 33 #1 Fall 2014 *Unity* published by Rockville, Maryland NALC Branch 3825.

# from the editor-guy

If you've attended a Branch 782 meeting and I've been there, you have probably come to the conclusion that I talk too much. I don't blame you.

*I think that I talk too much, too!*

However, if you've dedicated the time to be at that meeting, I feel that you are there to get as *MUCH* info/input as possible to help you "survive" your journey as a Letter Carrier until you get to the point when *YOU* choose to leave!

**THAT'S** why I take up so much of your time at the Union meetings with all of my ranting. (Hmmm...does this mean that I *also* "rave"?)

With that in mind, I want to share a few "snippets" from other NALC members who have shared some insights in their NALC newsletters that might merit your attention.

Understand their importance, and incorporate them in how you approach this job of being a Letter Carrier...

For example, this is a modified excerpt from an article written by NALC Branch 4374's Wyatt Kiefling for the November 2014 *Front Lines*.

"I trade away my life one hundredth of an hour at a time. I exchange it for money. I don't see money very often. I see a ledger that tells me how much money I have (or don't have). I write checks and use a debit card most of the time.

Anybody that knows me, knows it is not about the money, but what I can get in exchange for it. Isn't that what all of us are doing? Trading away hundredths of hours for the things we need and want even if it is off in the future?

Then why do we avoid doing parts of our job? We take short cuts to make

the job easier and to get done quicker. It is human nature to find the easy way to accomplish a task, but we cannot afford to surrender these hundredths of hours.

The M-41 tells us to take obvious short cuts. This does **NOT** mean that we skip our vehicle inspection or forego wearing seat belts between deliveries.

It does *not* mean that we check our FSS and DPS before we clock in, nor should we fill out postal forms off the clock. (AND, why do folks get their arrow keys before they clock on? And, *why* do they go to their case in the morning before they clock on and spend a few minutes putting flats up on the ledge, or going through the tub arranging SPRS? And, *why* do they go over to the supervisor and spend about five minutes talking about some issue on the route that they should talk about *after* they've clocked on? You will be paid to do these things!)

Skipping your breaks and taking a short lunch are not legitimate short cuts either. (Neither is getting back from the street, clocking off, **THEN** going back to the case "to clean up" when you're not on the clock *and not getting paid*...)

We all know there are things we can do to 'save' time.

I just want to point out that we give up these hundredths of an hour that become minutes that become hours and that becomes routes.

It **IS** part of your job to inspect your vehicle. Also, it **IS** part of your job to wear your seat belt. It **IS** our job to check our FSS and DPS. It **IS** our job to fill out postal forms. We get paid to do these tasks, **SO TAKE THE TIME TO DO THEM.** *You are paid while on your breaks so take them!*

**IF YOU WANT TO WORK FOR FREE, COME RAKE MY LEAVES OR VOLUNTEER AT A HOSPITAL OR CHARITY."**

Next is an edited excerpt of an article Branch President Bryan Rubner wrote for the November 2014 Eastern Iowa Branch 373 *Eastern Iowa Reporter*. He addresses an important issue...

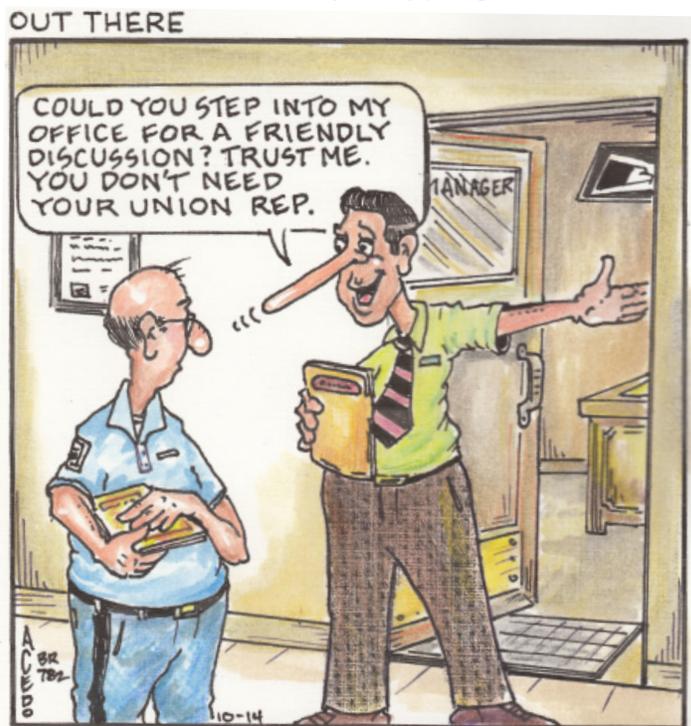
"If you are called into the office for an investigative interview, **it is in your best interest to ask for a Steward.**

It becomes very hard to overturn a discipline when there is not a Steward present during the investigative process to make sure that what is being discussed has been properly documented.

They might have a Steward in there, they might not. They are not required to tell you that you are entitled to a Steward.

It's **YOUR** responsibility to ask for one.

Please take this advice seriously folks! If they ask you to come into the office, ask them if you could be facing any type of discipline. Tell them that you would like to have a Steward present. Whether or not you have a personality conflict with your Steward or not, **the Steward is your BEST defense if you get into trouble."**





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The options 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 here-in 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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Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
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Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
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# General Meeting

## Tuesday

### February 24, 2015

### 7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office  
 2628 "F" Street  
 Bakersfield, California

**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Could  
 YOU  
 Really  
 Win  
 \$500?*

Each and EVERY month, Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage **YOU** to come to our Meeting\*. There was no winner in January...

**AND THE POINT IS?**

**YOU** really do have a chance to win **\$500** on February 24!! ! Be there!

\*The fine print: TO WIN THE MONEY **YOU** HAVE TO BE PRESENT WHEN YOUR NAME IS DRAWN!

OUT THERE



THANKS TO JOSE GONZALES - FLORESVILLE, TX.

BY FRED ACEDO BR. 782



The web version of our newsletter contains eight extra pages of info which—hopefully—you will find informative and thought-provoking...