

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

FEBRUARY 2016

Golden Empire Branch 782 Excess Equipment

The following equipment has been determined by the executive board to be excess to the needs of the Branch. Any Branch 782 union member interested in the below listed items should attend the Branch General meeting on February 23, 2016. If more than one person is interested in any single item a drawing will be held to determine who will receive the item.

- 1-Paper shredder
- 14- Letter size hanging clip boards
- 3- Legal size hanging clip boards
- 2-Twin packs smoke alarms
- 1- Oak frame mirror 24 inches by 36 inches
- 18-Steel folding chairs
- 2- Boxes of twelve-24X24 air conditioner filters
- 2- Boxes of twelve-16X25 air conditioner filters
- 1- Box of twelve-14X25 air conditioner filters
- 1- Box of twelve-18X24 air conditioner filters

So...How Does Everything Get Done in the Branch?

by David Miller, President
NALC Branch 458

Editor-guy note...

The original article by David Miller was modified in a few places because Branch 782 does things a little differently. As examples: Branch 458 elects unit Stewards; the terms of office in Branch 782 are for three years and in Branch 458 the terms of office are two years; Branch 458 also has a position for a "Members Benefit Director" which Branch 782 does not. There are also a number of Officer duties which are delegated to different Officers by Branch 458 than Branch 782 but David's language wasn't modified because he addressed the basic duties which are still taken care of.

Finally, an NALC Branch may do things a little differently, but every Branch must still comply with the basic responsibilities outlined by the NALC Constitution.

I would like to thank all the members of the Branch for having the confidence in our elected officers to perform their duties for the duration of their new term of office.

For those that wonder, "How did that guy get to be president?", I'll explain really quick how each officer is "chosen" and what their duties are.

First, all officers of the Branch are elected to three year terms This is governed by the By-Laws of the Branch.

Furthermore, the NALC Constitution details the responsibilities of each officer. The Constitution also allows for branches to combine officer positions (except for President) and provides latitude to create additional positions.

So, in general, what is it that each of the Branch officers do?

The **President** has general supervisory powers over the branch. He/she is responsible for presiding over meetings, preserving order, signing all expense warrants, sees

that other officers are performing their duties, assigns additional duties to other officers, enforces the Constitution and By-Laws, appoints all committees and casts deciding votes in cases of a tie.

The President is not allowed to make or second any motions or be involved in any debate about motions. By virtue of office, the President is also the Chief Steward of the branch.

The **Vice -President** presides in the absence of the President when necessary. He/She also oversees the grievance process with all Branch 458 stewards, along with various other responsibilities outlined in the By-Laws.

The Vice President presides when the President is absent. He/She also represents members in the Grievance/Arbitration procedure in the associate offices of the branch, along with various other responsibilities outlined in the By-Laws.

The **Recording Secretary** keeps records of the branch proceedings and expenses, drafts all expense warrants, maintains membership records, processes new membership applications, attends to all correspondence of the branch and maintains all branch files with the exception of grievance activity.

The **Financial Secretary** is responsible for safe guarding all bank accounts and investments of the branch and forwards all funds payable to the branch to the Treasurer. He/She also collects dues from members in arrears.

The **Treasurer** receives and disburses all moneys of the Branch, pays all expense warrants properly drafted and signed by the President & Recording Secretary and ensures timely reporting of Branch records to the Department of Labor.

The **Sergeant-at-Arms** preserves order at all meetings, ensures that only members or authorized guests are present during such meetings, maintains attendance records of branch meetings and forwards that information to the Recording Secretary.

The **Mutual Benefits Association (MBA) Representative** educates and assist the membership of the Branch on MBA retirement and insurance plans.

Health Benefits Representative is

responsible for educating the members of the Branch with the NALC Health Benefit Plan and assisting our members with questions or issues with claims with the NALC Plan.

The **Trustees** of the Branch examine and report to the Branch the condition of the books of the officers on a quarterly basis. They also maintain custody of all Branch property.

All of these officers are elected, by secret ballot, by the members of the branch. Elections are held every three years for all officers

(This past year, no ballots were mailed to members because — for the first time in at least a quarter of a century — there were no contested elections. While I could easily

say that's more than likely a result of a good group of officers that do their jobs well, I could also say that it's the result of nobody new wanting to help the branch.)

Even though it's costly, it's a healthy measure for each Branch to have contested elections. For the incumbent officers that are running for re-election, it provides an incentive to perform their job better than they have been performing. For challengers, it provides an outlook on the inner workings of the Branch with the hopes of possibly being a part of the team that does what we are responsible for — representing the interests of Letter Carriers and their families.

Article courtesy of *The Sooner Script* published by Oklahoma City, Oklahoma NALC Branch 458 in February 2016.

USPS BY THE NUMBERS

Operations

FY 2015	Number	Change from SPLY*
Total mail volume (Millions of pieces)	154,157	-0.89%
Mail volume by class (millions):		
First-Class	62,419	-2.22%
Periodicals	5,838	-3.42%
Standard (bulk mail)	80,030	-0.35%
Shipping & Packages	4,530	14.13%
International	940	5.26%
Other	400	-17.53%
Average days to delivery FY15 Q4		
First-class mail	2.5	
Package services	4.8	

*SPLY=Same Period Last Year

Info by way of the Fall 2015 (Volume 28 No. 3)
NALC ACTIVIST published by the NALC

Finances

FY 2015 (millions)	Number	Change from SPLY*
Operating Revenue	\$68,928	1.6%
Operating Expenses	\$73,826	0.9%
Controllable Operating Income	\$1,188	
PSRHBF Expenses	\$5,700	
Workers' Comp adjustments	\$809	
Net operating loss	-\$5,060	

Employment

FY 2015 - PP25	Number	Change from SPLY*
City carrier career employment	167,958	2.3%
Full Time	166,603	2.9%
PT Regular	541	-6.1%
PTF	814	-53.9%
City Carrier Assistant 1	31,543	-7.9%
City Carrier Assistant 2	6,798	-7.9%
City carriers per delivery supervisor	13.3	
Career USPS employment	497,133	2.1%
Non-career USPS employment	150,662	0.9%

Minutes of the January 2016 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, 2016. The

flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present except Darryl and Anita Holderman. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South and Taft. Also present was Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Webmaster, Rick Plummer; Assistant Financial Secretary, Marisela Rodriguez; Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer and Frank Martinez and Basil Zuniga of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes of the December 15, 2015 meeting were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Savannah Cinecoe, Richard Manzo and Nathan Barnett.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega reported that "She's looking for someone to take over." Basil Zuniga reported that it was the AO's turn and Norma did get a few people to come. He said newsletter articles need to be in by February 11th. Frank Martinez reported that the last Social and Recreation Committee was just about reviewing the ticket sales from Christmas Town and CALM. Mike Towery reported that there are 940 books remaining. Mark Ramirez reported that he put a list in the newsletter of Urgent Cares, hospitals, labs, pharmacies etc. that are part of the NALC Benefit plan. He also informed members that most vaccines are free at CVS. Molly Biggar reported that the balance due on the Food Drive cars is \$314.00

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery shared that members Mark Ramirez and Debbie Anderson were listed in the Californian as donors to Houchin Blood Bank. Mark has donated 13 gallons and Debbie 20 gallons. Mike also reported that he has been to the GMF at night to file grievances for carriers who are working nights.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Basil Zuniga "was thinking about something." He and Rick Plummer showed the members present how to get on and navigate the branch website, 782nalc.org. They also discussed and showed a portion of President Fred Rolando testifying before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee. Members were encouraged to go to NALC.org to see the complete video. Mike Towery reported that 4 CCA's were fired. He reminded members that if they value their job they need to take the time to do it safely. Management will pressure you to run your route and if you have an accident, you could be fired. He also reported that there are five residual positions. They will be posted nation wide for 21 days. If any positions are still unbid, up to 5 CCA's could be making regular.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$45,889.32
Dues and Income	\$12,505.78
Total Balance	\$58,395.10
Expenses	\$15,449.60
Ending Balance	\$42,945.50

The 50/50 Drawing for the Food Drive cards was won by Norma Hamer who donated her winning to the Food Drive cards. (\$37.50/\$37.50)

Dicie Wilder donated two gift cards to be raffled; they were won by Bonnie Whitbey and Kim Gerdes. Bonnie Whitbey donated a bag for a raffle which was won by Debbie Guillet.

The Drawing for \$250 would have been won by Paul Hernandez who was not present.

There were 46 members and 5 guests present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Non-Member List January 2016*

Downtown Station

S. Kirby
J. Cruz
D. Zuniga

South Station

M. Martinez
M. Andresen

Brundage/East Bakersfield

I. Valdez
V. Guerrero

Hillcrest

100% UNION!!!

Dole Court

D. Morris

Stockdale

J. Oh

Camino Media

C. Rodriguez

Arvin

100% UNION!!!

Avenal

M. Gazarin
E. Diaz

California City

100% UNION!!!

Delano

C.V. Quebral
D. Barreto

Lamont

100% UNION!!!

Ridgecrest

G.D. Schatz

Shafter

M. D. Voights
L. M. New

Taft

B. M. Krier
K. J. Hughes

Tehachapi

B. C. Den Beeman
C. Rosales

Trona

100% UNION!!!

Wasco

100% UNION!!!

*CCA names are in Italics There are 22 non-members.

The right to “due process” is a well cherished procedure found in most Union contracts. Simply explained, it is a set of requirements that must be fulfilled before any disciplinary action can be carried out against you. Management has the burden to prove you acted as charged. This very important concept can be illustrated by the following case. Enough time has passed and the principal parties have moved on; still, no names will be used.

Why YOUR Union Matters

As then-President of NALC Branch 245, I was summoned to represent a Carrier in a matter involving the Office of Inspector General (OIG) — one of the investigation powers overseeing the Post Office.

The fact they were involved indicated a potentially serious charge.

The Carrier and I were escorted into an office where two agents awaited. Introductions were made. One agent asked our Carrier a couple of routine questions which were fine to answer (Name, what station do you work at, etc.) This was followed quickly by a Miranda warning. This was a red flag carrying criminal liability.

At that point, I advised the Carrier to request legal counsel and remain silent which the Carrier did. The agent attempted to persist alleging workman’s comp fraud had been observed. The Carrier and I left. Several days after a letter of termination was issued charging the Carrier with filing a false compensation claim and violating medical restrictions.

The Union requested the entire case file and any other information used to make the charge. I was given a lengthy report issued by the OIG which was the entire basis behind the charge. After preliminaries the agents’ narrative stated that she initiated surveillance on the Carrier’s residence noting an open garage with a Ford pickup inside. She became concerned that she might be observed so she pulled away and circled the block. Before reaching the residence again she saw a Ford pickup leaving the subdivision and she pursued.

The vehicle drove to a store and the male driver and a female exited and entered the building. The agent attempted to video the couple but apparently could not properly operate the camera. The report stated this was due to focus issues. The agent did photograph the license plate and remained outside. After a period of time, she observed the female exit the building, enter the vehicle and leave.

There was no explanation as to what happened to the male and the contact was ended. I interviewed the Carrier who denied ever

having left his home and wrote a statement to that effect. The Carrier acknowledged owning a Ford pickup and was asked for the license number. It did not match the photograph taken by the agent. I requested a copy of his registration and asked if any family or friends owned a Ford pickup. His answer was, “No.”

At the formal A meeting the management representative presented their side and I asserted that the Carrier was not guilty as charged. It was pointed out that no positive ID had been made. The video was worthless. The agent did not make a visual ID nor attempt to confront the couple she had followed, flash her badge or request identification. The license photo did not match the Carrier’s vehicle registration. It wasn’t even close. The agent failed to even run the plate.

Management’s representative tried to explain this away as a typo. The rep refused to drop the charges and the case was sent to the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT). Management’s representative at the DRT, again displaying a lack of moral courage, refused to drop the case and it was scheduled for arbitration.

Fortunately the charges were dropped in their entirety just prior to arbitration.

It is worth noting that at any stage of the grievance process *had the Union failed in its tasks*, our Carrier would have been fired. Innocent. Yet, the Carrier would have been fired anyway.

Management does have an option. They can (and often do) just refuse to settle and choose to send it further up.

As this case illustrates, innocent people can be and are accused of acts they did not commit. Without the due process clause of a Union contract you would be fired.

Because you have a Union, management *MUST* prove and not just allege, the charges against you.

Respectfully

TERRY LEBER*

Article courtesy of the Rockford, Illinois January 2016 NALC Branch 245 Newsletter. Terry Luber is now retired and a Branch 245 Trustee.

H USTON LETTER CARRIER

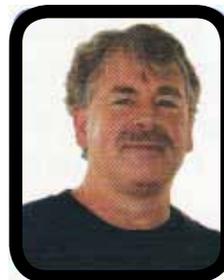
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO - BRANCH 283

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January 2016

USPS WEINGARTEN CARD

Many Managers and Supervisors will tell the steward they are not allowed to talk during the interview that they can only listen and take notes. The Weingarten Card actually tells the manager that they are to start off the interview by telling the employee the steward may advise you and participate in the interview.

I advise all employees to always ask for a steward to be present during an investigatory interview. Take notes; write down the questions that management is asking you, and your steward should take notes too. It is very important to write down the answers you gave management. You will be shocked to find out many times the answer you gave is not the answer management wrote down. Many times management will not try to find out the truth about a particular incident, but will try to twist the truth to fit their version. By taking notes it will help your steward to represent you if management decides to issue discipline.



USPS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER WEINGARTEN WHEN INTERVIEWING AN EMPLOYEE WHERE DISCIPLINE MIGHT RESULT.

Under the Weingarten rule, you must allow each employee the following rights in conducting an investigatory interview:

1. Each employee has a right to be represented by a union steward during an investigatory interview if before or any time during the interview, and employee requests a union steward or in any other way indicates that he or she wants representation, you **MUST** do one of three things: (1) you must provide a steward, or (2) you must end the interview or (3) you must offer the employee the choice of continuing the interview without a steward, or of having no interview at all and therefore losing the benefit that the interview might have given him or her. When in doubt it is better to provide a steward or contact labor relations immediately.

2. The supervisor must tell the employee and steward the purpose and subject of the meeting before the meeting begins. Then if either the steward or the employee requests, adequate time must be given to them to talk privately before (or during) the interview.

3. **DURING THE INTERVIEW, YOU MUST PERMIT THE STEWARD TO PARTICIPATE.** He or she may ask questions, clarify the employee's answers, comment about the questions, discuss favorable facts, suggest others who have information, and advise the employee. The steward is not allowed to disrupt the meeting or tell the employee not to answer a question if that happens, postpone the remainder of the meeting and consult your manager or Labor Relations immediately.

4. You may begin the interview, if appropriate, by saying:
- A. You are going to be asked a number of specific questions concerning (specify the issue causing the interview)
 - B. You are subject to disciplinary action if you refuse to answer or fail to respond truthfully to any questions
 - C. Your steward may advise you and participate in the interview (assuming the employee has requested a steward).

Know your rights!

Ricky Dueboay, Branch 283 Vice President/Treasurer

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

IF YOU THINK IT CAN LEAD TO DISCIPLINE (AND NOW DAYS EVERYTHING DOES) YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION. REQUEST YOUR STEWARD!!! CUT AND CARRY THIS WITH YOU!!!

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to participate in this discussion."





Here's a situation that hopefully you never experience: Your supervisor, postmaster or station manager comes up to you and asks to you to come into the office. You do so. When you enter you see one or maybe two individuals that you do not recognize. Your supervisor leaves you alone with them. Then these people introduce themselves as agents of the Office of Inspector General (otherwise known as the OIG). They tell you that they're just trying to find out what happened. They tell you that you have nothing to worry about. **WHAT DO YOU DO?**

The first and **ONLY** words out of your mouth should be, "I'll be happy to answer your questions as soon as I have Union representation." And you keep repeating those words. One of two things will eventually happen. Either the OIG agents will provide you with Union representation or they'll become

frustrated and stop trying to conduct an interview. If they give up on the interview then you probably will be sent back to your route. In some circumstances your supervisor may send you home. Either way, as soon as you are able you should be calling the Union office (916-348-0133) and letting us know what happened.

Expect the OIG Agents to try to trick you into talking to them. They may tell you the Union won't help you or that you don't need representation. The one thing you need to remember is **THEY LIE**. They will use a variety of tricks to get you to say what they want you to say. Maybe one of them is a sweet looking little old lady. She will try to persuade you that she's on your side. She cares about you. She's just there to help you. **SHE IS LYING TO YOU.**

Another technique they may try is to tell you they already have all the information they need. They just want to hear your side. They will claim that they have recordings or

that they have video. They'll tell you that they already have all the evidence they need. Again -- **THEY LIE.**

They will try to bully you. They will try to scare you. I remember one "Special Agent" put his badge and gun on the desk just to try to intimidate the carrier. Maybe they will use the "good cop, bad cop" technique. One of them will act tough while the other one chastises him for the way he's treating you. The second one will pretend to be on your side. He'll act like he's your buddy. Don't fall for it. **THEY LIE.** Continue to tell them you will be happy to cooperate once they provide you with your Union Rep.

Remember, they will say and do **anything** to get you to talk and give up your rights to representation. Unless you have personally seen them in action it is hard to believe how devious and unprincipled the OIG is. **NEVER** trust them. **THEY LIE.**

Veronica

Article courtesy of the Sacramento, California NALC Branch 133 "Second Vice President Report" via the February 2016. *Swingroom Gazette.*



VP-ing

by Michelle Decker-Conrad
NALC Branch 791 Vice-President

We have seen an increase in discipline lately. Management has been issuing discipline for those that are involved in a vehicle accident, whether it be at fault or not. Just because an accident happens doesn't mean management has just cause to issue that carrier discipline. Discipline is to be issued as a corrective action, to correct a behavior or situation that they have attempted to correct before issuing the discipline. The carrier needs to be fully aware of the rule, instruction or whatever it is that needs to be corrected. Management is also issuing attendance discipline. One thing we argue in these is disparate treatment. Why only a few carriers get discipline when there are carriers in the same situations that did not get disciplined. Management has always has their "favorites". Most carriers know who they are and it is apparent they get treated differently.

With discipline, this makes it easy for the Union to prove disparate treatment and get the discipline removed.

If you do receive discipline, please let your steward know as soon as possible. We have time limits of 14 days to file a grievance from the date the incident happens or the discipline is issued. If you wait a week to say something it makes things more difficult.

Something else we have seen a lot of is injuries. With the weather and ice, please make safety your priority when out delivering mail. One common thing the carriers say is "I was trying to get back in time, I was in a hurry". If it is going to take longer and you will not be making your return time because you're trying to be safe, let management know that when questioned. Saying it was icy and I had to go slow to be safe shouldn't be something management could argue with.

Article courtesy of the Everett, WA February 2016
NALC Branch 791 *Monthly Report.*

2016 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
Prescription Drug Program	1-800-933-6252
CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
"24/7 Nurse Hotline"	1-877-220-6252
CVS/CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Solutions for Caregivers (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Locator Line	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation)	1-866-784-8454
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount)	1-877-521-0244
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 Bakersfield	(661) 631-9258
Shared Services Option 5 live person	1-877-477-3273

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

NALC Drug Prescription "Claims" Filing
P.O. Box 521926
Phoenix, Arizona 85072-2192

OptumHealth 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

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

PPO Deductible: Per Calendar Year
\$300 "Individual"
\$600 "Self & Family" or "Self Plus One"

NALC Health Benefit Plan Members:

All members High Option, Consumer Driven Plan, and Value Option Plan members can go to our NALC website located at www.nalchbp.org "click on" High Option, Consumer Driven, or Value Option then under your health plan choice "click on" Member Resources...then choose Health Risk Assessment... then click to register. You will need to create a user name, and password. The program will ask you to choose "one" of three valuable incentive gifts before completing health assessment survey:

1. \$40.00 CVS gift card (LIMIT: Two \$40 CVS gift cards per family)

2. Family CignaPlus discount dental program (one calendar year)

3. Wearable activity tracking device (one calendar year)
Two wearable tracking devices per family

The assessment takes about 25 minutes, and is very simple to complete.

"This is a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option. Detailed information on the benefits for the 2016 NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official brochure (RI 71-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the official brochure."

Many immunizations are Free (Adult/Child) when administered at a PPO pharmacy/facility. Some will require a prescription from the Doctor.

URGENT CARE

Sendas Urgent Care: 9450 Ming Ave., Bakersfield (661) 587-2500
M-S 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Saturday/Sunday 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
ASK FOR OTHER LOCATIONS

Accelerated Urgent Care: 9710 Brimhall, (661) 829-6747
9500 Stockdale Hwy, (661) 735-3943 8 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. daily
ASK FOR OTHER LOCATIONS

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!!!

MARK RAMIREZ
NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative
(661) 398-6075

Ramblings of a Retired Mind on the Mark...

I found this timely, because today I was in a store that sells sunglasses, and only sunglasses. A young lady walks over to me and asks, "What brings you in today?"



I looked at her, and said, I'm interested in buying a refrigerator. She didn't quite know how to respond. Am I getting to be that age?

I was thinking about how a status symbol of today is those cell

phones that everyone has clipped onto their belt or purse. I can't afford one. So I'm wearing my garage door opener.

You know, I spent a fortune on deodorant before I realized that people didn't like me anyway.

I was thinking that women should put pictures of missing husbands on beer cans!

I was thinking about old age and decided that old age is when you still have something on the ball but you are just too tired to bounce it.

I thought about making a fitness movie for folks my age and call it 'Pumping Rust'.

When people see a cat's litter box they always say, 'Oh, have you got a cat?'

Just once I want to say, 'No, it's for company!'

Employment application blanks always ask who is to be called in case of an emergency.

I think you should write, 'An ambulance.'

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older.

Then it dawned on me. They were cramming for their finals.

As for me, I'm just hoping God grades on the curve.



Birds of a feather flock together and then crap on your car.

The older you get the tougher it is to lose weight because by then your body and your fat have gotten to be really good friends.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

Did you ever notice: The Roman Numerals for forty (40) are XL.

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he can tell when he's really in trouble..

Did you ever notice: When you put the 2 words 'The' and 'IRS' together it spells 'Theirs...'

Aging: Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Some people try to turn back their "odometers." Not me. I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.



You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

Ah! Being young is beautiful but being old is comfortable.

Lord, Keep your arm around my shoulder and your hand over my mouth.

*Health Prescription:
Humor from
Mark Ramirez!*

COMMUNICATING WITH THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN: THE MEDICAL RATIONALE

by Mike Pukansky
NALC Branch 238

Finding an attending physician you can communicate with is very important for the health of your claim. He or she must be willing to write any reports that OWCP might require or reports that may be necessary to challenge an adverse action by OWCP.

It is most important and to your advantage to find an attending physician who is a board-certified specialist in the area of your accepted condition. This is especially true if your injury is long-term or permanent.

In the past medical specialists assumed rest was the most important factor in recovering from injury. In recent times, because of advances in orthopedic and sports medicine, physicians have adopted a "use it or lose it" approach to rehabilitation for many injuries because disuse can result in atrophy and deterioration.

While there are instances where the attending physician intends for the written restrictions (CA-17 or otherwise) to apply at all times, there are other instances where the physician intends the restrictions to apply only to the work environment. It is often the case that the physician wants the injured worker to test the limits of his or her restrictions in the course of normal life activities in order to hasten recovery or maintain the function of the injured body part.

At the same time, the physician does not want to subject the healing worker to the stress of timed production work. You should seek clarification from your physician about the scope of your restrictions.

If it is your physician's MEDICAL JUDGEMENT that the restrictions should apply ONLY TO THE WORK ENVIRONMENT, the physician should put this in writing over his or her signature and attach it to the CA-17 or other statement of medical restrictions.

For example your doctor may state in order to aid my patients recovery from his/hers injury (or to maintain the function the injured body part) he or she has been advised to use his/her

arms to the extent tolerable as he/she goes about his/her activities of daily living away from work. Such a statement could go a long way toward clarifying the situation for both you and the Postal Service-especially if the Postal Service is investigating your restrictions.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN: KEEPING YOUR DIAGNOSIS CURRENT: As an injured Letter Carrier you should know and understand what condition or conditions OWCP has accepted in your claim.

YOU SHOULD ALSO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT CURRENT CONDITIONS YOUR ATTENDING DOCTOR HAS DIAGNOSED IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR WORK RELATED INJURY. IF THESE ARE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT OWCP HAS ACCEPTED, YOU MUST CORRECT THIS.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PHYSICIAN: SPRAINS AND STRAINS: Sprains and strains are among the most common injuries we suffer as letter carriers. In general, they are temporary conditions that are expected to get better over time.

Often however, injuries that begin as sprains or strains end of being more serious medication conditions that ake more time to heal or may even become permanent. Because of this, IT IS CRUCIAL that your attending physician understands how OWCP defines and applies the different definitions of causations.

IF YOU HAVE A CLAIM THAT INVOLVES A PRE-EXISTING CONDITION: Attending physicians should be prepared to employ these definitions as they use their best judgement to present and to rationalize the medical evidence for the claimed injury.

This article is courtesy of
The Branch Reporter
published in February 2016
by Canton, Ohio NALC Branch 238
in February 2016.

Out there





Scholarship Season Is Here!

FEEA's 2016-17 scholarship contest is now open. Students can access the online application form to start the application process. Additional guidelines and instructions are included with the application. Answers to many common eligibility and application questions can be found in our Scholarship FAQ.

The program is open to civilian federal and postal employees, their spouses, and college-age children. Students must be in a degree-granting program at an accredited college or university and must also have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. The sponsoring federal employee must have three years of service by August 31, 2016, in order to qualify for this year's contest. In addition to completing the online application, students must also submit supporting materials including: an essay, letter of recommendation, list of awards and activities, transcripts and fall semester grades, and a copy of the sponsoring employee's most recent SF-50. Complete details and instructions, including the essay topic, are emailed to students after they complete the online portion of the application.

Students who meet all requirements and submit a complete application on or before the March 25, 2016, deadline will be eligible to compete for an estimated \$400,000 in awards. Funding for the awards comes from federal employees who pledge to FEEA in the Combined Federal Campaign, a \$100,000 annual sponsorship from the BlueCross BlueShield Association, and more than \$25,000 from Long Term Care Partners. Funds also come from 18 partner programs administered by FEEA and open to members of the sponsoring Unions and Associations, as well as their family members. New for 2016 are two \$5,000 scholarships provided by the American Public University System. APUS awards are available to federal employees pursuing a degree via the online programs of either American Public University or American Military University.

Awards are made by 27 all-volunteer regional committees across the country. On average, FEEA receives more than 3,000 eligible applications each year and awards 300-400 scholarships. Short bios of many of the 2015-16 winners can be found on FEEA's website.

A Short History of our Contract

HELLO AGAIN FROM THE DESK OF YOUR SECRETARY-TREASURER I hope and trust that this new year finds you all healthy, wealthy and a little wiser. This year brings us the expiration of our 13th national agreement on May 20th, 2016. Therefore a little history of where we came from and how we got here is in order.

The wages, benefits and working conditions of the nation's City Letter Carriers, who are represented by the NALC, have never been given, they've been forged at the bargaining table through negotiation and sometimes through arbitration. Over 40 years ago, President Richard Nixon, because of the wildcat postal strike in 1970, signed the Postal Reorganization Act (PRA) into law. It replaced the 195-year-old Cabinet-level Post Office Department with a new public corporation called the United States Postal Service. The PRA gave postal employees virtually the same rights as other working Americans, including the right to bargain collectively for wages, benefits and improved working conditions, with one crucial exception: the right to strike was replaced with the right to binding interest arbitration. Rather than stage a walkout if negotiations fail, each party presents its case to a three-member arbitration board, one member named by each party and a third, neutral member selected jointly to chair the board. The panel considers the issues and renders a binding judgment.

The first two-year national agreement, settled in 1971, was negotiated between the USPS and all seven postal unions who all bargained together. The agreement included cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), salary increases based on the CPI paid out at intervals and negotiated wage increases. The next two contracts in 1973 and 1975 were also negotiated. The seven postal unions had been consolidated into four, each covering one or more postal crafts: the NALC, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU), and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA). When

An understanding of the history of our national negotiations is not only important to understand how hard we've had to fight to get what we now have but to understand the danger of national binding arbitration.

the 1975 agreement reached its end in 1978, inflation was rampant. The Postal Service argued it needed protection from dramatically rising wages. Initially the NALC, along with the APWU and the NPMHU, agreed to a proposal to limit COLA payouts. Letter carriers were outraged over the COLA limits and, for the first and only time, the membership rejected the proposed contract in a national referendum. The rejection forced the COLA issue into arbitration, the arbitrator rejected the COLA limit and retained the existing COLA clause.

The 1981 agreement was successfully negotiated, but the Postal Service began claiming postal employees were overpaid compared to private sector workers in similar jobs. Three years later, this drove the 1984 contract talks to reach impasse. During the resulting interest arbitration, the board rejected the Postal Service's demands for massive wage cuts, but lowered the starting salaries of NALC and APWU members who were the only postal unions still bargaining together.

The 1987 agreement was negotiated but both pay and health care cost forced the 1990 contract to arbitration. The Postal Service wanted to reduce its share of health insurance costs, then averaging 90 percent of total premiums. The arbitrator agreed but told the parties to try to reach an agreement through mediation. Those talks failed and in 1993 a second arbitrator issued an award that cut the Postal Service contribution to an average 85 percent over a five-year period.

At the 1994 National Convention, carriers decided the NALC should "go it alone" in contract negotiations, break-

ing ties with the APWU. In both 1994 and 1998, because the USPS asked for pay cuts the talks went to arbitration, with the NALC raising its own concerns over the impact of automation, specifically delivery point sequence (DPS), on carrier productivity, injury rates and street times.

In 1994, the NALC made a major push for a significant pay upgrade based on the changes in letter carriers' work. The arbitrator did not grant the increase but wrote in the final award that NALC had raised an important issue that



needed to be addressed in the future. Equally important, the arbitrator rejected the Postal Service's claim that city carriers were overpaid.

Negotiations deadlocked again in 1998. After extensive hearings, letter carriers won a major victory, with the arbitrator awarding a major pay upgrade ("Grade 6" in the old pay system, which is now known as City Carrier Grade 1) in recognition of the increasingly difficult nature of letter carriers' work.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the postal anthrax attacks delayed completion of the 2001 contract talks until the spring of 2002. The negotiated agreement covered an unprecedented five years, included a series of wage increases and continued COLAs, and overhauled the grievance/ arbi-

tration procedure by incorporating the Dispute Resolution Process into Article 15.

In 2006, the NALC was unrelenting in its desire for protection from the Postal Service's increased use of contract-out of delivery services. Negotiations dragged on for months, and arbitration seemed likely, because the NALC pressed Congress for protection from contracting out, postal management relented and an agreement was finalized.

The 2011-2015 contract arbitration went to binding arbitration after a long period of negotiations resulting in the Das award in January of 2013. It not only created CCAs among many other things it also changed the expiration date from November to May of the expiration year.

An understanding of the history of our national negotiations is not only important to understand how hard we've had to fight to get what we now have but to understand the danger of national binding arbitration. While the NALC saves no expense and arbitrates better than any union in the country arbitration as can be seen is a dangerous

proposition. It kept our uncapped COLA but also gave us TEs and CCAs instead of PTFs.

How long, you ask, will it be before we have a new contract? Well the only honest answer is: it depends. If negotiations fail to result in an agreement, the PRA sets out a timetable for dispute resolution that includes mediation, fact-finding and, if necessary, binding interest arbitration. Although the law establishes specific time frames for fact-finding and arbitration, the parties often mutually agree to waive these time frames and the process often goes on for extended periods of time. Fear not, as many of you already know, our current agreement remains in effect until the establishment of a new national agreement either through negotiation or binding arbitration. □

Article originally published by Portland, Oregon NALC Branch 82 B Mike in February 2016.

Should YOU Be Paranoid?

by Frank Salazar, President NALC Branch 2902*

Surprise surprise... what a way to start off the New Year. I came across this article indicating that the Postal Service OIG is looking for an outside company to teach it how to track and spy on targeted employees (e.g. injured carriers on OWCP or those suspected of a crime). Instead of paraphrasing, I just copied and pasted the article here for you to read. My advice, be very, very careful as to what you post on any type of social media. It may come back to haunt you.

USPS OIG Seeking Vendor to Train Agents on Tracking Social Media and Internet Footprint

Internet Reconnaissance and Social Media Training

November 25, 2015 USPS OIG agents will be getting Internet Reconnaissance Training next June on methods to find target individual's social media and Internet footprint. These could be individuals on worker's compensation, for example, exceeding their limitations? Crooks selling stuff on CraigsList? Only reconnaissance techniques that are legal and within agency policies/USAO guidance should be presented/discussed. Must be done covertly with no attribution back to the OIG.

The Supplier shall provide training on the methods to identify the target individual/organization's social media and Internet footprint. The training must, at a minimum, include the following items:

a) Internet Reconnaissance - Internet Footprint

(Overview of areas of interest to be covered and how to focus and prepare Agents to conduct successful Internet Reconnaissance).

- ◆ All social networks, person search, dating websites, user names search, phone search, public record, court record, website download
- ◆ Locating targets and developing the methods necessary to attack those targets successfully (Via Social Media/Internet)
- ◆ Only reconnaissance techniques that are legal and within agency policies/USAO guidance should be presented/discussed
- ◆ Must be done covertly with no attribution back to the OIG

b) Internet Reconnaissance Checklist of Sites and Searches

- ◆ TIO/lexusNexus/Accurint
- ◆ Facebook / linkedIn/Google+/Twitter/Instagram/YouTube/MySpace/linkedin/YouTube/Classmates/Picasa/Flickr/Vimeo/Pinterest/Google Image Recognition/TinEye
- ◆ Online Sales & Services - eBay/Craigslist/Amazon
- ◆ Public Records Search – Federal/State/Local & County Grantor Grantee
- ◆ Public liens Public Leases
- ◆ Civil & Criminal
- ◆ Divorce
- ◆ County Probate
- ◆ County Clerk
- ◆ Real Estate & Tax Assessor's Records
- ◆ Bankruptcy
- ◆ Federal District Court Records
- ◆ Corporation Records and Filing

c) Google Advanced Search

- ◆ All names/accounts/Email/Nicknames/Aliases/Phone Numbers
- ◆ Corporation Wiki.com (if business references are identified)

d) Website/Screen Capture Utilities

- ◆ Adobe Acrobat Pro (Create PDF from Web Page)
- ◆ HITrack Website Copier
- ◆ Opanda /exif Viewer
- ◆ Jeffery's Exif Viewer (online only)
- ◆ Awesome Screenshot Capture
- ◆ FacePaste
- ◆ Video Download Converter
- ◆ Fireshot Capture
- ◆ Download Facebook Album (works with Instagram too)
- ◆ Vigram

*This reprint was found in the February 2016 Red River Carrier published by NALC Branch 1227 in Burkburnett, TX. It was originally published in the Chatsworth, California NALC Branch 2902 Mail Bag News in Volume 58, No. 1 (January - February 2016).

No. But be very careful...

WHEN YOU ARE INJURED ON THE JOB

NO ONE WAKES UP IN THE MORNING, GETS OUT OF BED, throws open the curtains of the window and greets the day proclaiming: "today is the day when I am going to be in an on the job accident!" But it happens. It happens to new carriers and it happens to veteran carriers as well. It happens when you aren't doing anything wrong.

Just recently there was a CCA carrier who was hit by a car and seriously injured while she was crossing the street legally in a cross walk. This carrier did nothing wrong.

Being injured on the job is traumatic enough but, unfortunately, with your injury also comes paperwork to fill out and submit and a process to follow. Your supervisor and manager also has responsibilities. All parties need to be diligent to ensure that you and your medical bills are being properly paid while you are out of work.

First, be sure to immediately notify your supervisor. Next you are going to want to request the following forms:

- **Form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/ Compensation**

This form must be supplied by your supervisor. If you do not need immediate medical attention, fill out the CA-1. If you are in need of immediate medical attention, fill the form out as soon as possible.

BE SURE TO FILL THE FORM OUT YOURSELF, DON'T LET SOMEONE IN MANAGEMENT DO IT.

Be thorough in describing the accident and related factors. At the bottom of the CA-1, question number 15 allows you to choose either Continuation of Pay (COP) or Sick leave. Choose COP. For the first three days after your injury, you must use either sick leave, annual leave or leave without pay. By choosing COP, you will be paid your regular pay for 45 calendar days after those initial 3 days. If your absence exceeds 14 days, ask the Postal Service to convert those initial 3 days to COP and credit the proper leave account. You must supply medical evidence of your injury, signed by a doctor, within 10 days to qualify for COP.

Once you have completed and signed your CA-1, give it to your supervisor or manager. Don't just leave it on your supervisor's desk. They are required to give you a signed receipt (page 4 of the form) immediately. Make sure you get one.

The Postal Service has 10 working days to submit the CA-1 to the Office of Worker's Compensation Programs, (OWCP).

- **Form CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment**

This is the form that authorizes payment for medical treatment and provides an initial medical report. This should be supplied to you by your manager within 4 hours. When a traumatic injury requires emergency care, and a CA-16 cannot be provided at the time of the care, it will be issued to the source of emergency care within 48 hours.

This is the part of the process that Branch 82 sees most often forgotten by management. This is important too. We have many CCA carriers out there without insurance. Getting authorization to have your doctor's visit paid for by the Postal Service may eliminate possible confusion by the provider on who is actually going to pay for your visit. Many times we have seen the doctor's office try to bill the patient instead of the Postal Service.

- **Form CA-17, Duty Status Report**

This is to be given to you immediately by your supervisor for you to provide to your doctor. The Postal Service is responsible for filling out the job requirements on the left (side A) of the CA-17. Your doctor fills out the right (side B) of the CA-17, listing any medical restrictions.

After this is completed by your doctor give a copy of the completed CA-17 to your supervisor. This form is going to inform management of your work restrictions after your accident.

These 3 forms, and these steps are crucial to ensuring that your pay, and your on-the-job injury claim is processed properly. If any of this does not happen when you are injured on the job, please contact your steward or call the Branch 82 office. Remember, this is just the initial step in your on the job injury claim. We have an OWCP officer here to assist with all other aspects of your case. □

Article originally published by Portland, Oregon NALC Branch 82 B Mike in February 2016.

Negotiations?

by Richard Najera
President, NALC 231

It concerns me greatly when I continue to hear that Carriers are having difficulty communicating their needs for the day. And that was “needs” I said, and not “wants”.

I think we must clarify that at the onset; it is entirely acceptable to tell your supervisor, manager or postmaster what you NEED to get the job done on any given day. It is not acceptable to take what you WANT to do work for which you would otherwise have knowingly needed less time to complete.

In short, don't ask for more time than what it takes to get the job done.

Just because we believe — and quite often can prove — that there are those in management who are being outright dishonest in some of their dealings with Letter Carriers, it does not justify becoming like them. Don't check your integrity at the door when coming to work and don't resort to dishonest means to achieve your goals.

But I do understand that it can be quite difficult to deal fairly with those in management who either don't know what they are talking about when it comes to delivering the mail (and yet think they do); and/or have so little respect for the work that we do that they won't bother to learn anything more than the minimum needed to get through the day.

Our daily interactions with management move along a well-traveled road, but it seems

far and few between when Carriers and management are actually

“driving” in the same direction rather than having the many “head on collisions” we see, as of late.

I couldn't say whether or not it would benefit anyone to provide a rundown of sorts to help with getting that PS Form 3996 filled out correctly. There are so many variables that exist, but we can go over a few details.

You already know that at some point in the morning, you can expect your supervisor to come around asking how your day will be; that assumes you are not in those few places out there where the management staff seems to think you have time to leave your casing duties to chase them down for a 3996.

The requirement is that you let your management staff know the point at which you are of the belief that you will not be able to deliver all the mail in the scheduled time. Typically, this would be after the eight hours guaranteed for full time regulars, and is tied to the fact that work performed after eight hours in a single work day will be paid at the regular overtime rate.

The eight hour limit applies to PTFs and CCAs as well. (It must also be noted that a 3996 can also be modified, even as you are leaving for the street, if there is a reason you can provide that justifies such a change (i.e., discovering more DPS volume on the dock; more parcels brought to the office distributed to your duty assignment; or whatever unexpected

event occurred which will cause you to be later than you already planned for the day).

But what about the negotiation itself? That can be as easy or as hard as you decide it should be.

When it comes down to it, there shouldn't be confrontation on the floor during this time. IF the manager wants to get loud, we can look to addressing that with his/her boss, but in no case should the Carrier allow himself/herself to be pulled into a shouting match over management projections.

If the problem of poor communication persists and/or they won't provide you with a copy of your completed and approved *or* disapproved PS Form 3996, you must talk to your Shop Steward for assistance.

So, when the supervisors come around, “armed” with all that data from DOIS, you should have yourself given thought to what your day is going to be like.

Now in some offices, management doesn't wait for the last

dispatch of mail to get to you (as in flat and letter volume dropped at the cases in letter mail trays, bypass NLM, white tubs of flats, etc

When this happens, and you are asked to provide an estimate for your day, you can either tell them that you haven't received all your mail yet (since it has probably been only ten minutes after you walked through the door that the supervisor is there asking you for an estimate) and that you will get back to them. Let them know, if you do know at that time, that overtime is likely and that a 3996 will be needed) or if pressed, provide them with the best estimate you can with the understanding that it is subject to change if the morning presents additional issues that affect the outcome of the day.

Provide an honest estimate based on your experience as a Carrier and your knowledge of the route.

Do not worry about it when they respond with “An hour and a half? Your swingperson (or the CCAs) get it done in eight hours or less everyday!” You aren't required to run the route to get it done in line with their projections.

Consider these points:



1) if you run today, get ready to run every day thereafter when they come to you for your “demonstrated performance” regardless of whether or not you had more mail before than the day in question;

2) if you decide to run, and get hurt, there will be no mercy for you — the Carrier who was “supposedly doing what he was told” and got hurt.

So your responses, and that which you put on the 3996,

should be what you **need** to get the job done. The DMS, or more specifically the SLP, requires them to go to the street to observe the so called “outliers” who do not “conform” to what is expected...expectations that are based mostly on flawed projections.

In the end, the expectation you should make of yourself, for any of us, is to work safely and efficiently while you deliver the mail entrusted to you, day in and day out.

Consider more...

There is no requirement to walk a certain speed, make a certain amount of paces per minute or deliveries per hour; and there is no standard out there by which anyone can say definitively that “X” amount of mail volume will take you exactly “X” amount of time to complete.

What tends to determine more or less how much your route will be “out of whack” on any given day is the amount of mail you get, the types of mail you have on that day including coverages and parcel volume,

and the type of route you have to deliver.

Sure, your morale is important, but in some places we are still working on getting management to understand that that also determines how well employees perform their work. Until then, keep holding the line and making sure you have ample time to get your job done without hurting yourself or grinding yourself into dust.

Article courtesy of *The Carrier* published by Phoenix, Arizona NALC Branch 576 in February 2016.



UNAUTHORIZED OVERTIME - EXPANSION OF STREET TIME

by Phillip Dufek, President
NALC Branch 576

Done daily, the following can help avoid being called in for a “Fact Finding”. And, if this does occur, it can significantly reduce being considered for discipline. Should Management pursue discipline, it is a strong defense.

When “you are of the opinion” you will need overtime to “case and deliver all of the mail distributed to your route” inform management. Request and fill out a PS-3996 and get a copy. This is AN “estimate” and things may change out on the street. If not given the time you request, understand you will probably be calling in should you need additional time.

The morning meeting is NOT a bargaining session; you should be inform Management how much time/assistance you need to “case and deliver” all of the mail at your route. If instructed to curtail, request a PS-1571 (Curtailed Slip) and fill it out. *Obtain a copy of both the PS-3996 and PS-1571 your records. The originals may somehow mistakenly disappear...*

If overtime/aux assistance is not approved, anticipate you may be calling in.

If while delivering mail you become aware you are “probably not” going to deliver the mail in the time authorized, call in. Management should either tell you to return with mail or continue delivery. Follow their instructions. (Write the time you called in, who you spoke to, and what the instructions were given, on your copy of the PS3996.) Directions such as “deliver all the mail and be back...” IS authorization to work overtime as established in National Level M-00326. The written notes have provided irrefutable evidence in a Carrier’s defense when Management forgot to record it on the call-in log.

If leaving the route for a comfort stop, place all of the mail securely in the rear of the vehicle BEFORE leaving the route. Then return to the next delivery address BEFORE to moving mail back into the front. This reflects only time actually spent with the comfort stop AND records

time spent securing the mail. Performing duties is **NOT** part of a comfort stop time. (Many Carriers mistakenly find out saving time only gives an impression they are taking an additional break and/or expanding street time.)

Finally, remember don’t try to make up a “plausible” answer during an investigation. If the incident took place days before and you can’t recall the specifics; say so. Most Carriers can’t accurately remember minutes from days ago and even more from a week before. If you have any questions (as always) ask to see your Steward.

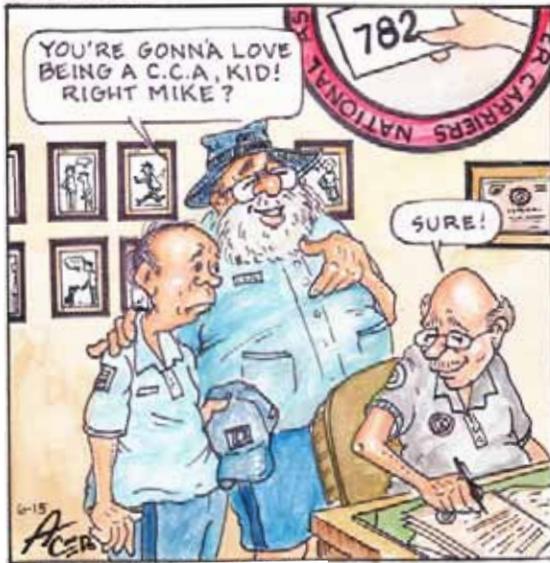
As your President elect, what I’ve learned from Presidents beginning with Ken Bielek, Doug Sage and following will be relied upon by myself and your Executive Board to move Branch 576 forward. In the past, Branch 576 was known for the most educated Shop Stewards. This meant Carriers were represented excellently. I intend to return us to that place of honor and distinction. ALL Branch Officers; from our Trustees to President take an oath to protect the Branch and represent its members. This can only happen through open and honest communication, genuinely listening to members, and all of us taking a sincere and active role in shaping our common future.

**Knowledge is Power, Pass it Along...
Pass it Along... Knowledge is Power!!!**

Article courtesy of the Fresno, CA February 2016 NALC Branch 231 *POSTMAN’S VIEW*.

NALC National CCA Conference in St. Louis, Missouri

OUT THERE



I recently had the honor of representing Branch 231 at the first National CCA Conference. It was a great experience that opened my eyes to many things that I will share with you.

DAY ONE started off with our National Union President Fred Rolando speaking about the CCA workforce, how it came about, the things we took a hit on, as well as the many positives that came with the creation of the CCAs.

This is the first time in Postal history that the non-career workforce has had as many rights that the union can uphold and also a set path to a career. He closed with talking about what the NALC is shooting for with this next contract and that is to close the gap between CCAs and Regulars, and if the Postal Service doesn't want to comply, we will go to arbitration.

Now, if you are a CCA out there that statement should assure you that the Union is here for you and fighting for better

working conditions in a big way.

The main speaker for the conference was Brian Renfro who then gave us a history of the NALC and how we have made improvements

for the Letter Carriers. We watched a video called The Strike at 40 which I urge you to look up on YouTube if you haven't seen it yet.

The video is all about the NALC strike of 1970 which brought about collective bargaining for the NALC. When you see how much the Letter Carriers put on the line and what they achieved it makes you proud to be a NALC member.

Rounding out the first day, there was a big emphasis on getting involved within the union and how to get fellow CCAs involved as well. This was my biggest take away from the whole conference.

Not only can the NALC fight for your job by enforcing the contract when management violates it, they can also provide you with a job.

There are many roles within the Union that need to be filled. These can range from volunteering to help organize a fundraiser, to becoming a

branch officer. There are state jobs and as well as national jobs.

Figure out something that you enjoy doing and bring your skills to the NALC. Start out by coming to the Union meetings if you haven't already, bring a fellow CCA, get to know your fellow Sisters and Brothers. Become a shop steward or an assistant and learn the contract. Maybe you are into politics. There are many avenues you could take in that sector.

The CCAs are the future of the Postal Service and the NALC so get involved, make your voice heard and let's make a better future for all our members.

DAY TWO was mostly class time which was more for the newer CCAs. We went over things like the grievance process, Opting and Hold Downs, the CCA retirement fund, and what is done once you make Regular.

DAY THREE was the "Rap Session" which is an open forum for anyone in the room to bring up anything to be discussed. If you have never been to a Rap Session it can turn into many things.

Some people like to use this time to complain about what's happening to them or in their offices. Some people like to get creative and share ideas like, "If the Postal Service is paying to maintain the vehicles and paying for fueling the vehicles I think they should pay to maintain and fuel the employees as well, so we should have paid one hour lunches and a company credit card to pay for our meals."

The gentleman that brought this up was 100% serious.

So, some of you might be wondering who I am and why I was chosen to go to this conference so I'll give you a brief rundown of my Postal Career. I started in late 2006 as a casual out of Ashlan Park. I worked there until June 2007 and because there were no casual clerk positions open I was let go. About a month later I was able to get a casual clerk job at the Clovis post office. I was a clerk for a few months and the Postal Service created the

OUT tHeRe



N.A.L.C. BR. 782 BAKERSFIELD CA.

TE position which I switched over to.

At some point I was moved midterm to Fresno and stationed at Cardwell. The next few years were spent calling in most mornings to see what station I would be working at and what time to show up for work;, getting fired once for being involved in an accident that wasn't my fault; and then losing a third of my pay once the CCA position was created.

My relative standing as a CCA was number one in Fresno and number 5 nationwide. I made Regular in June 2014 and in 2015 — with the encouragement of a few people — I became Shop Steward in zone 26. I have learned a lot from my fellow Stewards and especially Eric Elis who has been like a mentor to me.

Recently, I spent a Sunday heading up to Sacramento to attend training classes on the new scanners and how to fight discipline regarding the scanners.

It was at this training Richard asked me if I could think of some people that would be interested in attending the first ever National CCA Conference. I let him know I would be interested as well as some others that also might be interested.

This just shows that if you become an active member in the Union and make yourself available, there are many opportunities like this that will present themselves.

A big focus of this conference was to get active and get fellow CCAs active. I will continue to write articles for the CCAs, and would like to offer my knowledge and experience

to all the CCAs in our branch. If you have any comments, concerns, or need some advice or just someone to vent your frustrations, give me a call and I will do my best to be of help. My number is (559) 281-8887, (I just ask that you don't text

me unless you have an iPhone with iMessage.)

Finally, I would like to thank the Officers who helped organize my travel and the branch for voting to send me to this conference, I have learned a lot

and am excited to activate the next generation of the Postal Service and the NALC!

BRAD HIEB
NALC Branch 231
Fresno, California
Zone 26 Shop Steward!!

I recently had the honor of representing our CCAs at the first ever NALC CCA Conference in St. Louis. It was an amazing experience to meet with 200 CCAs from across the county and discuss issues related to the CCA position and the Post Office in general.

The conference began with President Rolando welcoming us and going over the basic layout of the NALC. He covered the hierarchy of positions with the NALC and what each position entails as well as what our dues go toward and what is done with PAC funds.

Next up was Brian Renfroe who is in charge of city delivery with NALC. He went on to cover a wealth of information related to CCAs that can be found in a new book produced by the NALC called City Carrier Assistant Resource Guide. They are currently working to get more of these books printed to distribute to all interested CCAs and new hires. The book goes over just about everything you can think of for questions related to CCAs including forms, healthcare, FMLA, opting and so much more. If anyone is interested in checking this book out, let me know. I am happy to share until we get some more copies.

One of the most interesting topics that were brought up was the upcoming changes to O.N.E. training. Mr. Renfroe stated that the O.N.E. on-boarding process-will-be changing in the near future to include a longer, more in-depth training. I feel that is a much needed change. When I started as a CCA, I still had so many questions my first day delivering on my own. I know I would have benefited from more training which would have made that first day alone a whole lot less stressful.

Another topic of great discussion was Contract bargaining suggestions in relation to CCAs. There were lots of ideas. Some were common themes from most stations and

there were a few that were pretty out there. Here is the list that I put forth on behalf of our branch. These ideas were gathered from our latest CCA meeting in January.

**CCAs being able to hold down
T-6 strings with higher level pay
Holiday pay / Sunday differential
One 8 hour work day per week
Lower insurance premiums
Guaranteed day off requests in advance
Paid sick leave
Federal Retirement plan + matching
Higher first uniform allotment
Balance CCA OT like the OTDL
Not counting military time against you
when applying for workers comp
Counting time served as
CCA toward retirement**

The overall experience of the conference was amazing! It was great to chat with the other CCAs from all over the country and discuss the differences of delivering in different climates and landscapes. I was surprised at some of the stories other CCAs shared about management and operational standards in their branches. Many branches reported little to no training on many things as well as the total lack of safety equipment in their offices.

These discussions made me realize how good we have it in our offices. I know we are not perfect and there are always areas that could improve but when I ask for new grippers or hand warmers, I get them right away. I know the reason conditions are so good here is the working relationship the union has with management. I appreciate all that my union Brothers and Sisters do to help keep not only the CCAs safe and fairly treated, but ALL Carriers as well. Thank you all for allowing me to represent our branch at this conference!

HEIDI ZELASCO
Duluth, Minnesota NALC Branch 114

Ask the Supervisor...

Dear Flabby,

by: Sal Dumwerk

Dear Flabby,

My supervisor and I have a really good relationship. If I think that I might be going into V-time, I just call him and he punches me out. He says it makes timekeeping a lot neater. Should I also have him do my banking?

Nada Klu

Hi Klu,

Taking straight time for that OT would also make life tidy

Once again, all you Craft employees will have the opportunity to "Ask the Supervisor." Supervisor Flabby, who has gone through extensive on-the-clock training, as all supervisors do, will answer any Post Office related questions for you. Address all queries to:

Dear Flabby
c/o New Vision
28806 John R. Road
Madison Heights, MI 48071-2818



Dear Flabby;

My supervisor yells at me every time I fill out a Form 3996. Shouldn't I fill this form out when I think I'm going into overtime?

Running Scared

Dear Running;

Why would you think you would go into overtime? All the routes have been adjusted to 8 hours. There is absolutely no reason for you to go into overtime. Remember you have eight hours to complete your route every day. Your *route*, get it? Not your lunch, not your breaks, no rest stops.... These are personal things, not to be confused with your job. Get in the habit of eating before you come to work. And don't drink a lot of water, that way you won't have to use the bathroom.

Dear Flabby,

Back in the day we used to have reference volume, and management would tell you how many feet per hour you were casing. Nowadays we have DOIS. I would like to keep up with the times. How do you calculate my reference volume and my foot per hour using DOIS?

Stone Age

Dear Stone,

It's a very complicated formula, but I'll try and explain. First you take the number of mis-sorted pieces in your DPS each day, add them to your other mishrows, multiply them by your route number, add your years of service on that particular route, and your vehicle number, subtract your supervisor's I.Q. (or 32, whichever is higher). Also subtract the caseable mail distributed to your route and divide by the day of the month. This will give you the "footage" for your route, which you then divide by your shoe size, and this tells you how many "feet per hour" you are casing. According to district MOPS this formula is 99.99% accurate.

Dear Flabby;

Why can't you guys figure out how to assign overtime on an equal basis? Are you really that poor in math?

Addy Upp

Dear Miss Upp;

I suppose you think that I can't count the mail volume correctly, either?

This page is courtesy of February 2016 *NEW VISION* published by Madison Heights, Michigan NALC Branch 3126.



from

Kim Gerdes

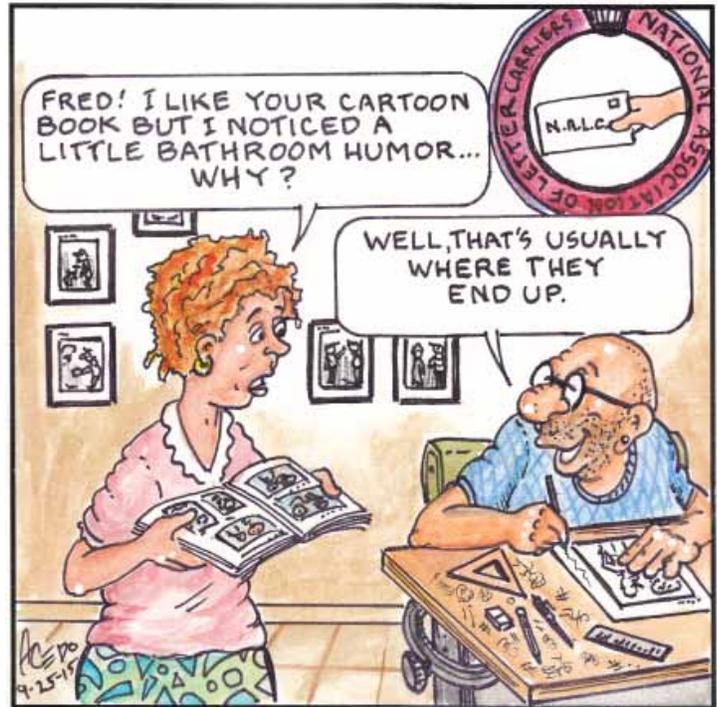
Recording Secretary

We hope you consider ordering a Fred Acedo **Out tHeRe** cartoon book!!

Over 130 pages of cartoons featuring our Letter Carrier world can now be yours for an amazingly low cost!!

To make life simple, request as many copies as you want by clipping the form at the bottom of the page and returning it & payment via USPS mail to Branch 782.

"OuT tHeRe"



You can also order by contacting me via e-mail at "krgerdes91@hotmail.com". Or, you can call me at the phone number on the bottom of this page. The book and projected shipping costs are provided below. You can even share *your* work life with family and friends with this book as a Christmas gift...

Finally, I want to present you with an up-to-now unpublished example of Fred's work. Enjoy!

Dear Kim Gerdes, NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Please send me _____ **Out tHeRe** book (s)! I know people who will love them!

Name and address for shipping: _____



One book is **\$7**. Two books cost **\$10**. (Postage 1 - 4 books is \$6.45. 4 - 7 books cost \$6.80..) We ship via USPS Priority Mail Flat Rate box. (For larger orders, these are still the best rates.)

NALC Branch 782 ● 2628 F Street ● Bakersfield, California ● 93301 ● (661) 834-2059

The Long and Winding Road...

by Ed Sholkoff, NALC Branch 2008

As time goes on and my time at the post office gets less and less, I really can't say I'm sorry to see it coming to an end.

For those of you that have read my articles, you probably think that I hate working for the post office, but really I don't. I'm just worn out. I'm tired of delivering mail, and packages. I figure that in almost thirty six years I have probably delivered several hundred thousand letters, magazines and catalogues. And I have probably delivered a hundred thousand or so packages.

That all sounds like a lot, and it is, but it was all part of the job. And I realized that when I got hired. I wanted to do that. I liked working outside because usually the time goes faster, than if you had an indoor job.

But like I said, I'm worn out. I'm tired. I'm tired of working for a company that shows no appreciation for the job that I do, day in and day out. A company that never says thanks you. And I don't mean gathering us all together for a service talk, and saying how everyone did a good job.

I mean where a supervisor comes up to you one on one, looks you in the eye, shakes your hand and says, "Thank you." Believe it or not, that actually happened to me a long time ago. But it was so long ago I couldn't tell you when it was.

And let's face it, not every one of us does a good job out there, sorry to say. And I'm tired of working for a company that has so many idiots in managerial positions. Idiots that put unnecessary stress and pressure on us every day we're there. Idiots that make you just hate coming to work.

I figured that when I was ready to retire I would say goodbye to some people on my route, maybe even be a little bit teary eyed. That could be expected after you've been on the same route for over twenty years.

But people can make you do strange things. I mean postal management. You'd figure that it would take a lot for someone to make you bid off your route, Especially a route that you've been on for over twenty years. But I did.

In fact I've bid off of two routes, just to get away from the same person. Now that's pretty sad. But my friend Eunice told me you should never bid off a route, just to get away from someone. She's probably right, but at the time it sure feels like the right thing to do.

Funny how the post office keeps and promotes people that have no business being in management. People that have no people skills, people that are just wastes of space. That's the part of the post office that I just can't stand.

But at least I know that I did a good job all these years, and I earned the money that they paid me. Speaking of money, we should all thank our unions for fighting for us, to get us the wages and benefits that we have.

A long time ago, I sat down and figured out how old I was going to be when I retired, and I stuck to that number and you should too. Don't

be one of these people that isn't sure when you're going to retire. When the time comes and you're supposed to get out, get out.

You can always do something different

when you leave the post office. Don't be one of those people that are still here when you're in your mid or late sixties. If you feel that you have to be on the overtime list, try to save some of that overtime money each payday.

And be smart and save as much sick leave as you can. You never know when you might need it.

And if you're stressed out from a certain supervisor or manager

and you're able to bid on other routes, sometime it's not a bad idea.

I left my route at Sunset Point and went to the Main Office because I felt like I needed a change. And it actually helped me. But, I'm coming back on Jan. 9. (But it doesn't matter, because by then I won't have much time left.)

OUT THERE



In closing, I would like to thank everyone who read my articles. I tried to make them fun to read and, something that you would enjoy. And I hope that you did. Maybe I should have been a writer. But don't forget, anyone can write a letter and have it published in the union paper as long as it's checked out first by the editor.

God bless you all.

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

Article courtesy of the Tarpon Springs, Florida January 2016 NALC Branch 2008 *Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update*.

from the editor-guy:

I just thought that you might want to know about this...

BASIL ZUNIGA

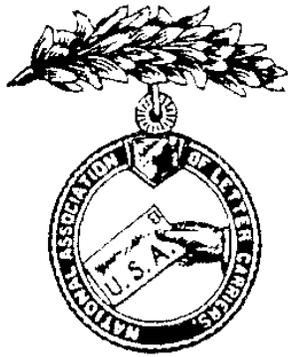
Each and EVERY month, Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage YOU to come to our Meeting*. There was no winner in January 2016!!!

Now, YOU could win \$300!!!

If no one wins in February, it will go up by \$50 each month until there is a winner — or until it hits the max limit of \$500.

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





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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).

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OUT THERE



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OUT THERE



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These cartoons were originally published in the December 2015 and January 2016 web versions of our newsletter. Wanted to share them with you, now.