

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
DELANO
MOJAVE

AVENAL
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RIDGECREST
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
LAMONT
SHAFTER
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BORON
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CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901

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MARCH 2010

at the

Mike:



"The Right to Remain Silent"

If you don't know your Rights, you may have a problem.

Knowledge can be a powerful thing...

In 1975, in *NLRB v. J. WEINGARTEN, INC.*, 420 U.S. 251 (1975), the U.S. Supreme Court announced the rights of employees in the presence of union representatives during investigatory interviews. Since that case involved a clerk being investigated by the Weingarten Company, these rights have become known as Weingarten rights.

Summary: When management begins to ask you questions that could lead to your being disciplined, you don't have to face it alone. If you have a reasonable belief that answers you give could be used by the supervisor to discipline you, the U.S. Supreme Court says you can refuse to answer any questions until the union steward is on the scene and has had a chance to talk things over with you first.

Continued on Next Page...

It's your Right to have the steward present during the questioning to advise you, ask supervisors for clarifications, and provide additional information at the end of the session. The employee subject to the interview must reasonably believe that the investigatory interview will result in disciplinary action.

A meeting called by the employer for the purpose of informing the employee of the imposition of discipline already decided, is not an interview subject to Weingarten rights.

1. Management is NOT required to inform the employee of his/her Weingarten rights.

It is the *employee's* responsibility to know this and to request the steward's presence. Once you've asked for the steward, any attempt by management to continue asking questions before a steward gets there is an unfair labor practice.

If supervisors pressure you by telling you that "you're only making things worse for yourself" by asking for a steward, that's against the law .

SO, BE SURE TO:

- Request the presence of a Union representative .
- Ask if you are a suspect in a criminal matter.
- Do not consent to a search of person or property. Ask to see a search warrant.
- Do not waive any rights, including the right to remain silent.
- Do not sign a waiver-of-rights form, admit or deny any allegations, or make any written or oral statement unless an attorney and/or Union representative is personally present. These are not complete guidelines. Always consult with a union representative and/or attorney.

2. When the employee makes the request for a union representative to be present management has three options:

- It can stop questioning until the representative arrives.
- it can call off the interview or,
- it can tell the employee that it will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her rights to union a representative (*an option the employee should always refuse*).

OUT THERE



3. The Role of a Union Representative

Employers will often assert that the only role of a union representative in an investigatory interview is to observe the discussion. **The Supreme Court, however, clearly acknowledges a representative's right to assist and counsel workers during the interview.**

The Supreme Court has also ruled that during an investigatory interview management must inform the union representative of the subject of the interrogation. The representative must also be allowed to speak privately with the employee before the interview. During the questioning, the representative can interrupt to clarify a question or to object to confusing or intimidating tactics.

While the interview is in progress the representative cannot tell the employee what to say—but he/she may advise them on how to answer a question.

4. What to Say if Management Asks Questions That Could Lead to Discipline

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

5. KNOW THE LIMITS! Just as it's important to know what your Weingarten rights are, it's also important to know the limits.

You are not entitled to have a steward present every time a supervisor wants to talk to you. But, if the discussion begins to change into questioning that could lead to discipline, you have the right to ask for your steward before the conversation goes any further.

If you're called in to the supervisor's office for an investigation, *you can't refuse to go without your steward.*

You can refuse to answer questions until the Shop Steward gets there and you've had a chance to talk things over.

If you are called at home and asked the same kind of questions, you have a right to insist on waiting to answer them in the presence of a steward.

THE RULES AT A GLANCE

Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the following rules apply:

RULE 1: The employee must make a clear request for union representation before *OR* during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.

RULE 2: After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose from among three options. The Employer must either:

- Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or
- Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
- Give the employee a choice of (1) having the interview without representation or (2) ending the interview.

RULE 3: If the employer denies the request for Union representation—and continues to ask questions—it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer. The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal.

Remember an “investigatory interview” is not a “True Confessions” meeting or some psychic info-mercial doling out advice to an employee—***IT IS A MEETING WHICH COULD POSSIBLY LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION INCLUDING REMOVAL FROM THE POSTAL SERVICE.***

Finally, as I end this month's message, let me give a very special congratulations to GEORGE VAQUERA! He is now a Retiree!!! I wish him the best of health and many, many long years of an enjoyable retirement! Now, he won't have to worry about *his* Weingarten Rights...

Minutes of the February 2010 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m., on the 23rd day of February, 2010 at the Branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present except Health Benefit Representative, Mark Ramirez. Also present was the Webmaster, Rick Plummer, SANE, Fred Acedo, Emma Gonzales of the Social and Recreation Committee and Legislative Representative Diana Chavez. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, East Bakersfield (Assistant), Oildale, Shafter South, Stockdale, Wasco and Taft. The minutes of the January 26, 2010 meeting were accepted as read.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Teresa Ortega reported "it's getting closer, but nothing new to report." Emma Gonzales reported that there is nothing new to report from the Social and Recreation Committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Mike Towery announced that the National Convention will be in July, we need to decide how many paid delegates to send. Molly reported that it will cost approximately \$1500., plus mileage, per person. A discussion was held and it was decided that we could send as many delegates who qualify and want to attend.

NEW BUSINESS: Teresa Garcia made a motion to purchase 200 Food Drive posters. Seconded by Jerry Patterson and passed. A discussion was held about having the BBQ after the Food Drive. Mike Towery will talk with the Postmaster and discuss it next month. Teresa asked for "lots of help." She will head up the drive but needs volunteers. Andrew Garcia reported that there will be a Softball Tournament. Last year the APWU donated \$300. He asked that the NALC donate the same amount. He made a motion that the NALC donate \$300. for the Softball Tournament. Seconded by John Ortega. Mike Towery informed the members that the motion will have to be published in the newsletter and a vote taken next month.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Anita Holderman asked that any members who have moved to please contact National. She has received several requests from National for correct addresses. Rick Plummer, Webmaster, will have the website up and running for members to view at the meeting. The website has links to almost every site members may need for the USPS and NALC. Website is 782nalc.com.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: John Ortega reported that the new MIRAP agreement will be signed

any day with new adjustments in the next few months. Andrew Garcia inquired as to the status of TE's. Mike reported that management has to get rid of 6 carriers. One is going to retire soon and one transferred to janitor. Mike discussed the proposed 5 Day Delivery implementation schedule. The "Fast Track" will have implementation by May 2011, the "Slow Track" will be September 2011 or February 2012.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$12,986.53 was collected for the month.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported

Beginning Balance	\$44,289.01
Dues and Income	\$12,380.68
Interest Income	\$6.53
Total Balance	\$56,676.22
Expenses	\$13,076.95
Ending Balance	\$43,599.27

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Shari Sharpe.

The Drawing for \$450.00 would have been won by Dan Felix... if he would have been present.

There were 38 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES

NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

OUT THERE



NON-MEMBER LIST

February 2010

402 OF THE 427 CRAFT EMPLOYEES IN CITIES WE SERVE ARE NALC MEMBERS! WE HAVE ACHIEVED A TOTAL OF 94.4%.

DOWNTOWN STATION

Dale Pearce
Javier Cruz

DOLE COURT

100% Union!!!

BORON

100% Union!!!

McFARLAND

100% Union!!!

TAFT

B. W. Krier
K. J. Hughes

SOUTH STATION

100% Union!!!

STOCKDALE

James Oh
G.S. Saran
A. White

CALIFORNIA CITY

100% Union!!!

MOJAVE

100% Union!!!

TEHACHAPI

V. L. Johnson

EAST BAKERSFIELD

100% Union!!!

CAMINO MEDIA

F. Medina, Jr.

DELANO

C. V. Quebral
L. A. Campos

RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce
H. G. Blanco
L.M. Montano
Y.P. Chea
T.P. Garcia

TRONA

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

HILLCREST

100% Union!!!

ARVIN

100% Union!!!

EDWARDS

100% Union!!!

SHAFTER

L. M. New
M. D. Voights

WASCO

100% Union!!!

BRUNDAGE

David Kinglee

AVENAL

100% UNION!!!

LAMONT

100% Union!!!

***THERESA NEEDS
OUR HELP!!!
Call her at
(661) 912-1086***



Hey, Basil! I know you missed the last meeting because of illness, but I thought you might help with one of the requests made at the meeting. Theresa Garcia has been running the Food Drive for the past two record-breaking years, and has been doing an excellent job, with help from her mother and all the volunteering Carriers. The problem is that this year, her mother is dealing with what sounds like a serious illness and she's going to need more help than ever before if we don't want to disappoint the hungry children of Kern County. She made an announcement at the union meeting that she needed volunteers to help, particularly hinting that anyone who was not camera shy would be a welcome addition for dealing with public relations and promotion,(local news, etc.).

Since it's all for a good cause, I told her I'd see if you were willing to post an eye-catching announcement, along with her phone number, in the next newsletter, so that those willing to sacrifice a little time to help out the needy can contact her directly. I hope that it's okay that I offered your help in your absence—it seemed like something you would have done if you were there. She and her husband are both Carriers, her mom's ill, and her boy, Drew, literally bounces off the walls,...so I believe that she's busy. Let's give her a helping hand!

JASON MUNOZ, the former...or maybe "Retired" Assistant Editor-guy

BRAIN SURGERY AND THE HOT AIR PUMP

DIRECTOR OF CITY DELIVERY
DALE P. HART

We open our story with beautifully textured veneer decking the walls of the Oktoberfest Post Office swing room in Oktoberfest, New York. Sitting across from each other with their morning coffee are Carrier Supervisor Nick O'Dimass and NALC Shop Steward Nora Snowflake.

NORA: I gotta admit it, Nick. You really surpassed yourself with that stand-up presentation on the necessity of a five-day delivery week this morning.

NICK: Thanks, Nora. That's a rare compliment coming from you. You're one Carrier who understands the relationship of the five-day week with the survivability of the Post Office.

NORA: No doubt about it. So, what private mailing firm have you arranged for a future gig for yourself? I mean, I've got too much respect for your intelligence as a person to think that there is some other motive.

NICK: I don't have any plans for another job. Once we go to five-day delivery, the stability of the Postal Service will be secure and I won't have to worry anymore about being laid off.

NORA: Come on, Nick. You're too smart to not understand that to get to five-day delivery, Congress would have to pass a law eliminating the requirement for guaranteeing America the same level of service it's enjoyed for more than 100 years.

NICK: I really didn't think of that, but, now that you mention it, the district manager wouldn't have asked us managers to do that stand-up talk if he hadn't already figured that out. I'm sure

the Postal Service has a pretty good plan in place to accomplish that; otherwise, they wouldn't have asked us to do the talk.

NORA: Maybe you're right. It shouldn't be any problem convincing Representatives and Senators to pass a bill that would accomplish that, despite the fact that they'd be getting extreme flak from voters, postal patrons and businesses that want to get their mail six days a week.

NICK: Listen, once they understand that the Postal Service is in deep caca financially, that Bill would pass with no problem.

NORA: Yeah, despite the fact that the Postal Service Office of Inspector General recently showed that the Office of Personnel Management overestimated, by \$75 billion, the Service's obligations to the Civil Service Retirement Fund. You think that amount might turn the Postal Service deficit into a surplus, or don't you trust the OIG?

NICK: Of course I do, but you don't think the Postmaster General would be lobbying for five-day delivery if that were true, do you?

NORA: Well, let's just say that the OIG knows what it's talking about. What other motive would the PMG have for

promulgating a reduction in delivery concept?

NICK: Money. We go to five-day delivery and we can eliminate all T-6 positions. All carriers would have a fixed schedule of five days a week and we'd reduce the cost of wages and benefits for one-sixth of the present carrier workforce. Besides, the PMG understands how overworked we managers are and, with that change, we'd only have to work five days with the same pay.

NORA: So what day do you think they'd eliminate?

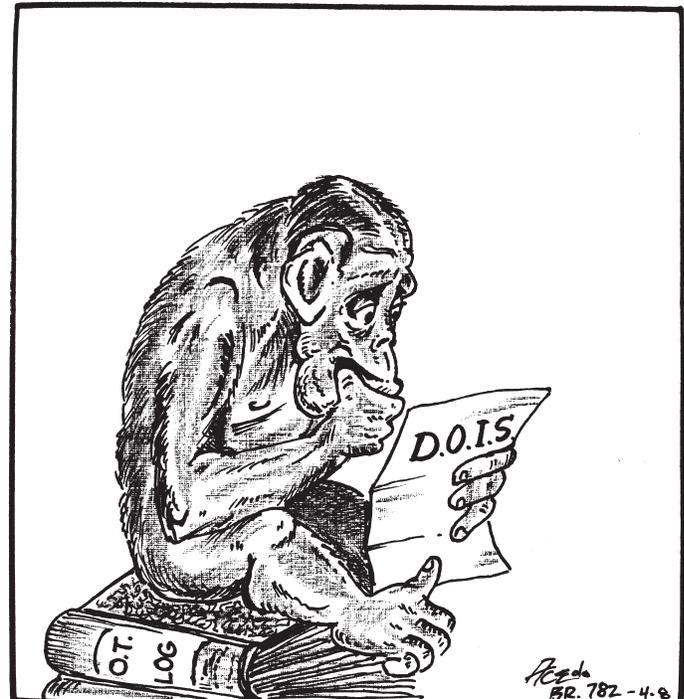
Nick: I don't make that call, but if I did, I'd eliminate Thursdays, since that's the lightest delivery mail volume for this office.

NORA: So, carriers would be working a fixed schedule of Monday through Wednesday, and Friday and Saturday.

NICK: That's the way I see it.

Nora: So, you think postal patrons

OUT THERE



won't still demand to get parcels and other mail delivered to them on Thursdays?

NICK: Of course they would, but they'd just have to get some other delivery service to do that.

NORA: Now you're talking about changing the law to modify the Private

Express Statutes. You know what happens when you do that for Thursdays?

NICK: What?

NORA: You show you can do it and you send a message to Congress that every time the Postal Service cries financial wolf, they can eliminate

another delivery day to take care of the problem. See where that's going?

NICK: I guess....

NORA: Ever considered a vocation in brain surgery? I can see you've really thought this through and you're not one to be sold a hot air balloon without first seeing if it'll float. Now, about that other gig....

Article courtesy of the March 2010 *Postal Record*

Postal Management is Still Pushing a 5-Day Delivery!

by David Miller, President NALC Branch 458

I reported last month that the Postal Service's efforts to reduce service to five-day delivery were all but dead. It didn't take long for the Postal Service to prove me wrong. Come to find out, the Postal Service has been working diligently behind the scenes on revising their old five-day delivery implementation plan. Like any battle of any war, it all begins with strategy and the Postal Service has been devising their strategy all this time. Their first step: Start talking to the media. Our Branch office is a subscriber to *Federal Times*, in the most recent edition there is a pretty chilling article, if you choose to believe it.

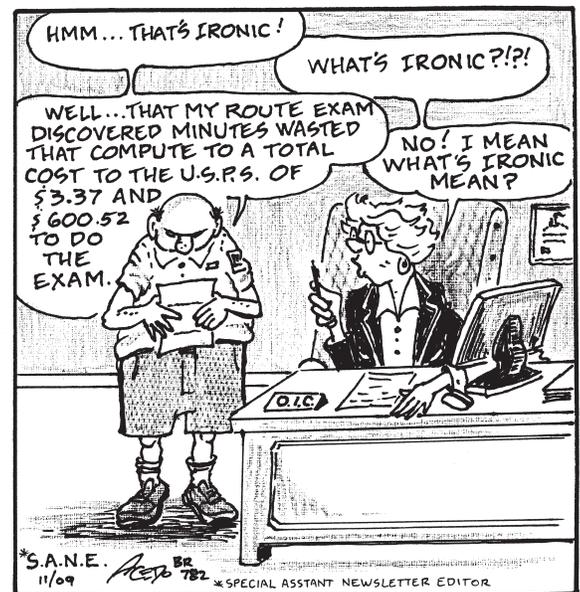
While obviously campaigning for five-day delivery, Joe Corbett (the Postal Service's Chief Financial Officer) is quoted as saying, "We will need some assistance from Congress or we will have difficulty paying all of our obligations this year." He later said, "And going into next year, we might not have enough cash to operate. ... We are dangerously close to running out of cash."

The Postal Service is blatantly ignoring our largest money saving venture—restructuring the Retiree Health Benefits Escrow obligations. A study recently released by the US Postal Service's Office of Inspector General (OIG) shows that the current funding formula for the Postal Service's Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) pension is inequitable and has resulted in the Postal Service overpaying the fund by a staggering \$75 billion.

The OIG believes (and the NALC agrees) that if the overcharge was used to prepay the Postal Service's health benefits fund, all of the Postal Service's liabilities for the health care fund would be met and all future scheduled payments could be eliminated. Annual payments are currently in excess of \$5 billion and the Postal Service could also stop paying for current retiree health benefits from their operating fund and shift that burden to the health benefits fund instead as it was originally intended. In fiscal year 2009, the Postal Service paid more than \$2 billion in retiree health care costs.

This alone would save the Postal Service more than \$7 billion per year. By reducing our unique delivery services to only five days, the Postal Service projects only \$3 billion in annual savings. Most skeptics disagree with that estimate, stating that the service is failing to take into account lost revenue from customers who rely upon the free Saturday delivery offered by the Postal Service.

To make matters worse, the Postal Service has been meeting secretly with representatives from the mailing industry and they seem to have them



convinced that elimination of Saturday delivery is the only way to save the US Postal Service.

Luckily, for employees and the general public, the White House and most of Congress isn't buying into the idea. The annual budget recently released by President Obama calls for continued "6-day delivery and rural delivery of mail." While the Postal Service says that is simply "template language," they acknowledge that the White House isn't on board with five-day delivery yet.

Our current career workforce is 599,000—down from 623,000 in 2009 and 751,000 in 1987. While the non-career workforce has obviously increased, so to have headquarters and area level positions: from 1987 to 2007 HQ staff increased by 35.9%. City carrier numbers have decreased by 3.3%.

Article courtesy of Oklahoma City, OK's March 2010 Branch 458 *Sooner Script*

Digest This...

**TIM RASCHE, Assistant Secretary
NALC Branch 14**

Recently, Branch 14 defended one of its members in an Arbitration.

The case was a Letter of Warning given to a 30 year career employee. *Not* a Letter of Removal, *not* a 14 day suspension, *not* a 7 day suspension...**JUST A LETTER OF WARNING.**

Our National Business Agent said he didn't recall a Letter of Warning (L.O.W.) ever going to Arbitration.

What was management's reason to push this grievance to Arbitration? According to management's advocate, they wanted to "correct the Carrier's behavior". Correct the Carrier's behavior?!?!? In thirty years of service, the Carrier had a clean slate except for a L.O.W. several years ago which the 'B' team reduced to a job discussion—and that job discussion was never given.

ARBITRATIONS ARE NOT CHEAP.

The Postal Service and the NALC split the costs. Paying the Arbitrator's expenses (airfare, hotel, etc.) along with paying everyone involved (Union and Management advocates, the witnesses, preparation, etc.) the cost probably wound up costing around \$5000...

\$5000 to arbitrate a Letter of Warning?

I guess the Postal Service is no longer in a recession.

Spending that much money is bad enough but the actual Arbitration was a joke. Management's first witness was the (A) Manager of Customer Service Operations who was directly involved with the incident that lead to a L.O.W. Since he was scheduled as a witness in another Arbitration, he was allowed to testify by speaker phone from Cincinnati. This was not fair to the grievant who should have the right to face his accuser at his day in court.

Before management had called all of its witnesses, the Arbitrator made an unusual (to say the least) statement. He said that his decision would not be based on Article 16 of our National Agreement but on the credibility of the testimony of (A) Manager of Customer Service Operations and the grievant.

WHAT?!????!???

The basis of any grievance is that the Union feels a Carrier has had his or her rights violated under our National Agreement. Forget witnesses, forget documented evidence—only the testimony of these two individuals! Not only is this extremely unfair, it's probably unprecedented.

Since this was an expedited Arbitration, the Arbitrator had 48 hours to reach a decision. The Arbitration took place on a Tuesday and the Arbitrator said both sides should have the answer by Saturday or Monday.

Two weeks passed without a decision. The Union called management's advocate only to find out the Arbitrator was in the hospital. He had had a brain aneurism which required surgery. He obviously didn't mail his decision and no one knows if he even reached a decision. I hope for nothing less than a full recovery for this Arbitrator, but here's the problem: If he doesn't recover enough to send his decision, then what?

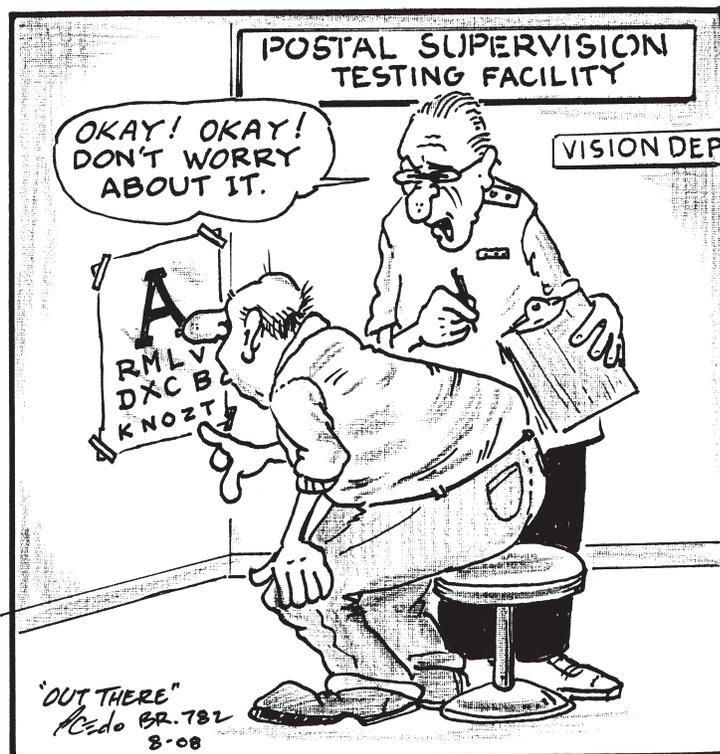
Early indications are that management would like to have the Letter of Warning arbitrated again...

Again???

Are you serious? ***Spend another \$5000?***

I guess the Postal Service is in better financial shape than I thought!

Article courtesy of the Louisville, KY
Falls City Branch 14 Newsletter
published in February 2010.



Each of us looks at everything from our own point of view. Let me give an example.

If I take a *Newsweek* magazine and hold it with the front cover facing you and ask you what you see, you might describe the picture of some famous person who is the feature story. I would be looking at the back cover for an advertisement for something.

We would be looking at the very same *Newsweek*, but each of us would be seeing it from our own perspective.

With that said, let me share a story with you.

A few months ago—during the last time that the PMG was trying to “sell” five-day delivery, I asked an anonymous, un-named, currently employed and highly regarded manager a very (to me) pertinent question.

“So...if the Postal Service eliminates one day of delivery—and if that day is a Wednesday—does that mean that you would work Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday *and* Saturday?”

He replied that he wouldn't work Saturdays because he was a manager and he was ‘on the clock’ 24/7 and *that* was what his salary was for.

I guess I might have asked if he might give back 20% of his salary if he was actually “managing anyone” only four days a week...but I didn't. *That's* not a way to cut costs for the USPS...

Now, as I write this, I want you to realize that this isn't some kind of a parable that seems to fit a point that I'm trying to make. This actually happened.

And—now as the Postmaster General seems to be renewing his push for five-day delivery to “save the Postal Service—I remembered that conversation that I had.

The facts are simply INCREDIBLE! If the statistics from 2000 through 2009 were not enough to cause outrage, this new information should. The number of the **HIGHEST PAID** Postal Employees has actually increased. The employees who actually perform the work on moving the mail, maintaining the facilities and equipment in support of moving the mail has decreased. Everyone reading this should contact their members of Congress and give them these figures.

The USPS opens new “Contract Stations” weekly without career postal workers, less mail security, and less training for those employees. Maybe the savings are going towards paying the higher salaries of the added headquarters staff—while career employees, along with customers, suffer.

I updated the chart below to reflect from 2000 through 2010. Thanks to everyone for their feedback and once again, I love hearing your thoughts.

SAM WOOD www.swfloridaapwu.org
President - Southwest Florida Area Local / American Postal Workers Union

USPS EMPLOYEE STATISTICS FROM 2000 - 2010

	2000	2010	-/+ Percentage
USPS Headquarters	2279	2924	+28%
Inspector General	664	1151	+73%
USPS HEADQUARTERS TOTALS	2943	4075	+38.46%
USPS Field Support / Inspection Service (Field)	9756	7173	-26%
USPS FIELD TOTALS	9756	7173	-26.47%
Postmasters (Installation Heads)	26121	23324	-11%
Supervisors / Managers	38797	27848	-28%
USPS SUPERVISORY TOTALS	64918	51172	-21.17%
Tech Personal	9959	5907	-41%
Clerks / Nurses	282147	161607	-43%
Mail Handlers	60851	49674	-18%
City Carriers	241079	197105	-18%
Motor Vehicle	9347	7614	-19%
Rural Carriers	57111	7434	+18%
Maintenance	42284	37513	-11%
Vehicle Maintenance	5546	4977	-12%
USPS CRAFT EMPLOYEES TOTALS	708324	531831	-24.91%

From a certain perspective, it really does makes sense. That manager's outlook is a “trickle down” conveyed by someone.

That “someone” is the people who establish policy and promulgate Postal “culture”. They are the people who are at the top of the food chain. They decide how to make our organization more effective, efficient and save money so they can continue to grow their business. But, “their business” isn't the USPS, it's *them*.

Looking at the numbers presented by an APWU local president in Florida makes me realize who is being served by the various strategies to cut USPS costs: And it's not us or the public.

BASIL R. ZUNIGA
Branch 782 Editor-guy

Confessions of a Former Station Manager Part V—

by Guy Nohrenberg, Letter Carrier
Simi Valley, California Branch 2902

Have you seen “Undercover Boss”? If not, tune in to CBS fellow Letter Carriers and enjoy the heck out of it! Your questions: “Would my boss do the job so things could be better in my office? Would he or she see solutions that are mysteries to them now but obvious to us? Will he get off that cushy chair or up from behind that standup desk?”

First, let’s regress.

In the beginning of 2008 we introduced the idea of pencil pushers carrying mail for one week every 4 months, on a route that the office’s Letter Carriers choose. Not a single Manager, Postmaster, District Manager, Area Manager, MPOO, or solitaire playing support staff member has taken us up on the offer. Why do you think that is? Yes. Because they have it GOOD WHERE THEY’RE AT and DON’T WANT TO KNOW.

Now, let’s jet back to the present time. To put it in my teenage daughter’s language; OMG! We’re like, in, like, trouble!

Or are we?

We know all the panic and chatter aimed at making us all work faster and unsafely. Let’s, however, get a clue here and see what we’re really about:

- In Article 1 of the Constitution of the United States, Congress is charged with the responsibility to “Establish Post Offices and Post Roads”.

- In 1983 Federal Law mandated mail delivery 6 days a week.

- A few days ago, President Obama reinforced the law in his budget statement—“That 6-day delivery and rural delivery of mail shall continue...”and made other supportive statements for our organization and it’s hundreds of thousands of employees.



So, what does that tell us?

Every mailman knows. People need their mail. Just ask those in smaller communities who are losing their Post Offices.

Just ask those waiting for letters from service members and loved ones, checks, birthday cards, packages, etc. What about the economy? Direct Mailings do result in profits that far exceed advertising in newspapers, commercials Tivo'd out on TV, and spam blocked virus infected ads on the internet. Americans want and need their mail. We will be around for as long as America is around. The only people who don't want it are those slobs who blog hate on the net about anything and everything to compensate for their own inability to have any say-so in their personal lives, OR those who have so much money that they've never considered the middle class or lower class as real people, AND those profiteers who want to allow any company or any person in your mailbox so they can make a buck while they case out your home. So, if you can't speak up in church, or your wife beats you, or you see your butler as a lower form of human, or you have a selfish interest in violating the Federal protection afforded to people's mailboxes, then you probably don't like or need the mainline of communication that built this great nation.

Don't even think about how your local Letter Carrier will be the one bringing you Immediate Federal Aid in the case of a Nuclear/Biological/Chemical emergency. We will deliver help to bloggers too!

But wait! What would John Potter do if he were an Undercover Boss? Well, having met him, it is my feeling that he's a well intended, good family

man and a good businessman not opposed to real solutions. I would suspect, that he would conclude the following, if he were to carry mail one week every four months on a route of our choosing:

- He would learn that "harassment and inappropriate conduct" is a daily occurrence, and is not being addressed in most offices.

- He would understand that the customers are what we are all about. The 5 day week talk would come to a sudden stop.

- He would set down any 204-B's who cannot pass the basic English and math comprehension test. After all, supervisor who isn't smarter than a 5th grader should not supervise. You have to be able to read, write, and add. Can I hear a "like OMG!?"

- He would encourage his staff to strongly support "Customer Connect" and reinvigorate our financial status, after about a million questions a week from hungry business customers on the route.

- He would propose a final VERA for all employees similar to the one in 1992. We would be offered a 6 month separations pay, 5 years time on top of time in service, military service inclusion, and no penalties, either for age or TSP. Newer employees would be hired where needed and because of lower seniority not be as expensive as those waiting for a boost to retire.

OUT THERE



- He would begin work on the Re-Federalizing of the USPS from a pseudo-pseudo-pseudo agency. He would ensure the maintaining of current contract rights.

- He would realize that all EAS (Executive and Administrative Staff) personnel need to carry mail one week every 4 months so they'd understand, too.

What would it be like if your boss really did understand? Put him to the task. Take the initiative. Politely, respectfully tell your boss that he could be much more effective, and respected, if he carried mail for one week every four months on the route of your choice.

If he doesn't take you up on it, well shame on him. Let's see if he can learn as much as real executives are learning on "Undercover Boss". I can tell you, from first hand experience, it is a real eye opener.

Be Well.
Work Proud!

Here we are in the third and final month. I've been calculating the total amount of weight we started with and what we are at now as a whole. 94 competitors. We lost an additional 250 pounds this month. That means **we lost a total of 1064 pounds in a two month period. OUTSTANDING!!**

Brundage Biggest Loser: Couples!!!

It seems that a lot of people either have lost interest or passed on the weigh-in for March 1st. I hope that people haven't truly given up. Give it all you got for the remainder of the month.

The February winning Couples Team is the same as the January winner: Dole Court Station's Laura Gordon and Jeff Honor. They had a total 5.9% loss. Awesome!!!! From the same station, Glenn Ryder and Diane Ryder were so close behind with a 5.8% loss. Just ONE PERCENT shy—Great Job!!!!



Two months in a row it has been neck to neck. Laura and Jeff have won their entry fee back plus an extra \$25 each. Jeff has lost a total of 54 pounds. For those of you who haven't seen him, he looks GREAT!

Jeff says that he just changes things up a bit to keep his loss going. Laura says that she is so proud of her partner, he was the one that held them up this month and she says to everyone: "Keep Going!"

Good luck everyone. "See you at the Finale". By the way, here are the Month 2 Totals. The Devil is in the fine print...

MABEL BULLIS
Brundage Steward

Brundage Station: Stacy Castillo (Clerk) - Enoch Moya (PTF Carrier) 0.00%; Mabel Bullis (T-6 Carrier) - Kaesia Shein (Sister) .64%; Maria Gutierrez (Carrier) - Vicki Guerrero (TE Carrier) 0.00%; Juanita Sullivan (Clerk) - Lonnie Sullivan (Spouse) 0.00%; Ruben Gonzales (PTF Carrier) - Amanda Gonzales (Spouse) 0.00%; Kim Williams (Carrier) - Judy Roberson (Carrier) 0.00%; Carrie Kendrick (204B) - Mike Bettes (Management) 1.19%; Yvonne Esquivel (T-6 Carrier) - Oscar Esquivel (Spouse) 0.00%; Beatriz Munoz (PTF Carrier) - Sonya Camacho (Rural Route Carrier) 0.00%; Shurie Amick (Carrier) - Kim Pumphrey (T-6 Carrier) -0.83%; Kimmie Gardea (Rural Route Carrier) - Rudy Gardea (Spouse) 2.92%

East Bakersfield: Jeff Harrington (E.B. Carrier) - Tony Esquivel (E.B. Management) 0.00%

Shafter: Melanie Davis (Shafter Carrier) - Norma Hamer (Shafter Carrier) 2.56%; Amanda Oneill (Stockdale Carrier); Shawnie Hamer (Shafter Carrier Daughter) 0.86%

South Station: Andrew Garcia (South Station PTF Carrier) - John Ortega (Stockdale Carrier) 2.95%

Arvin: Jeri Jimenez (Arvin Carrier) - Patricia Dorsey (Friend) 4.15%; Linda Perkins (Arvin Rural Route Carrier) - Beatriz Nerio (Arvin Clerk) 1.25%; Roy Rosales (Arvin Carrier) - Cynthia Gomez Moreno (Arvin Rural Route Carrier) 2.93%

Hillcrest Station: Sally Herrera (Hillcrest Management) - Alice Nelson (Stockdale Carrier); Carol Newton (Hillcrest Carrier) - Peggy Merjil (Hillcrest Carrier) 1.93%

Stockdale Station: Randy Courson (Stockdale Carrier) - Trisha Courson (Daughter) 0.00%; Caroline White (Stockdale Carrier) - Debbie Courson (Spouse of Randy Courson) -0.10%; Beatriz Rodriguez (Stockdale Carrier) - Jose Salinas (Son)

2.17%; Tina Harbour (Stockdale Carrier) - Sheirlyn Sharpe (Stockdale Carrier) -0.80%; Francisca Davis (Stockdale Carrier) - Elsie Florez (Stockdale Carrier) 0.00%; Cindy Flores (Stockdale Carrier) - Alma Marquez (Stockdale Carrier) 0.00%

Camino Media Station: Tina Munoz (Camino Carrier) - Gabriel Munoz (Spouse) 3.07%; Gina Garcia (Camino Carrier) - Mark Garcia (Spouse) -0.02%; Nick Faderly (Camino Clerk) - Amanda Myers (Spouse) 0.00%; Kalle Coronado (Camino Carrier) - Mike Coronado (Spouse) 2.95%; Margie Cruz (Camino Carrier) - Anita Certuche (Camino Carrier) 0.94%

Pegasus Plant (GMF): Yvonne Garcia (Pegasus) - Paul Pineda (Pegasus) -0.29%; Debbie Heer (Pegasus) - Ricky Heer (Camino Media Clerk) -0.55%

Dole Court Station: Fernando Gonzalez (Dole Court Carrier) - Oscar Salazar (Dole Court Carrier) -0.60%; Jennifer Gonzalez (Dole Court Carrier) - Paul Hernandez 2.78%(Dole Court Carrier); **Laura Gordon (Dole Court Carrier) - Jeff Honor (Dole Court Carrier) 5.90%**; Mike Copeland (Dole Court Carrier) - Dahlia Garcia (Dole Court Carrier) 2.02%; Cindy Jimenez (Dole Court Carrier) - Adolfo Jimenez (Dole Court Carrier) 0.00%; Glenn Ryder (Dole Court Carrier) - Diane Ryder (Dole Court Carrier) 5.80%; Hermie Encinas (Dole Court Carrier) - Deborah Jones (Dole Court Clerk) 1.67%; Priscilla Robertson (Dole Court Carrier) - Brenda Rhodes (Dole Court Carrier) 4.41%; Araceli Hernandez (Dole Court Carrier) - Laura Vega (Dole Court Carrier) 4.59%; Mona Renner (Dole Court Carrier) - Teresa Suarez (Dole Court Carrier) 0.56%; Teresa Garcia (Dole Court Carrier) - Sabrina Bonilla (Dole Court Carrier) 1.75%; Sharon Davis (Dole Court Carrier) - Ted Davis (Spouse) 3.91%; Angie Garcia (Dole Court Rural Route Carrier) - Bex Bougher (Dole Ct Rural Route) 0.91%; Jamie Gonzalez (Dole Court Supervisor) - CeCe Hernandez (Stockdale Carrier) -2.00%

GEORGE VAQUERA HAS RETIRED!

George Vaquera has done it! He has officially RETIRED! I wasn't sure he would make it, before getting thrown out, but he managed to surprise us all at EB! What can I say? But, George is just that kind of guy. People either usually really liked him, or well... the opposite of that. February 27th was officially his last day but I believe that twenty years on the job had worn out his patience—so his last punch was January 28th and he took *all* of February off.

No more “Code Blue” when the manager walks in. No more “Pablito, put 2fer Tuesdays on!” or “Super clerkia” for Candy. No more, “Yeah right!” after just about everything management said, or “No talking about the game...” after the Cowboys or the Yankees lost. No more “Cousin Juan”. And, no more having to ask which one of the Georges is “El Feo”(the ugly one); and, which one is “El Chulo”(the handsome one). EB's been kind of quiet without you, Georgie.

I've had the pleasure of being George's T6 for the past 7 years and I've *never* seen another Carrier so loved by his customers...



and “not loved” at the same time. His customers often tell me they miss their friend and the fact they were able to tell him anything. And then, there was Mr. Crocker... Lets just say he probably wasn't the only customer to tell George and old Henry Garcia that he had a gun. Now you know



where all of Henry's white hair came from. And—if you've ever watched “Cops” or “Stories of the Highway Patrol”, well that's what a day on George's route was like: FUN!

Before the Post Office, Georgie spent 14 years in the Air Force. He started in the Post Office back in 1990 as a janitor in the Plant. Apparently, weekends off and holding a broom was way too slow for such a high energy young man so he transferred to the Clerk craft and spent some time trying his hand at a slightly harder job. He came to his senses and transferred to the backbone of the Post Office—City Letter Carrier. George started as a PTF at Hillcrest, became an unassigned regular, and bid to EB. His first route was 509. *OUCH!* He slightly upgraded to Rt. 503 before finally coming home to Route 521 (which really is the same as 509 and 503). You know all those breaking news stories on the late news? Well, they were usually on Rt. 521... However, something about Route 521 just felt like home for George.

George is a family man! He has a beautiful wife named Nancy; three sons, and his baby is his daughter. If his kids were named after where they were born, they'd be named Bakersfield, Oklahoma, Lompoc, and Belgium. He enjoyed seeing Europe, and said that Belgium was especially beautiful. You know what?

George *has* been around the block! George is a *BIG* Dallas Cowboys and New York Yankee fanatic. Then, there is his dog (that we at EB affectionately called “Pinky”) and his potbelly pig that would do tricks when you called her name “Wilma”.

I wish you a very long and happy retirement, buddy! Don't forget to bring doughnuts. Really, don't forget!!!

PAUL SALAZAR, East Bakersfield Shop Steward

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

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Diabetes Foundation	http://www.diabetes.org
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Oh boy! If you didn't come out and play in the "Battle of the Stations" on March 7th, you missed out on a true afternoon of fun! The bowling alley was filled with letter carriers, TE's, clerks, mailhandlers, custodians, and rural carriers. Even different management (supervisors, 204b's, managers, postmasters) joined in the excitement. Family and friends came to watch the their favorite team take on the challenge of who was the best Station.

Thirty teams from all 8 stations participated along with A.O.'s represented by Shafter, Delano, Taft, Lamont, Arvin, and Tehachapi. I was happy to see two teams representing the Plant.

As teams checked in, it was nice to see the team spirit of different offices. There were matching bright color shirts, team logos—some the same from previous years—and some new ones. My favorite was Stockdale's "Dolls Rollin Balls"! As for the many of us who have moved from office to office over the years, it was nice to see many of the employees interact with each other. For many it had been awhile since they had seen some of their fellow employees.

All 120 bowlers showed up and we started on time. Without a hitch, the hooting and the hollering filled the room! With the sounds of DJ Sixxx mixing the tunes, there were Hi-Fives, cheering, and strutting going on everywhere.

After the first game, EB's "Kentucky St. Kids" and the Dole Ct. "Dawgs" pulled out in front in a commanding lead followed by Tehachapi's "Toilette Bowlers" and the Plant's "Postal Strikers". After two games, EB and Dole Ct "Dawgs" were still out in front with EB slightly pulling away.

This was by far the best year for bowlers. We had 5 or 6 people bowling over 200 in different games. This 4th Annual "Battle of the Stations" set some records for team

combined scores as well as individual scores. I will post all the stats and the individual winners in next month's article.

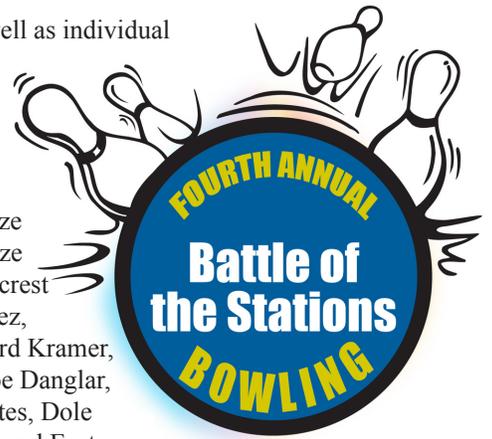
After each game a prize was drawn. Some prize winners included Hillcrest Retiree Paul Hernandez, South Station's Richard Kramer, Brundage Station's Joe Danglar, Dole Court's Tim Bettes, Dole Court's Dean Looker, and East Bakersfield's Barbara Gonzales. It was all part of the fun we had!

And, just as importantly, \$102 dollars was raised for COLCPE!!!

As the tournament ended and the points were totalled, the East Bakersfield "Kentucky Street Kids" (Brian Shellcross, George Vaquera, Jeff Harrington, and Greg Barazza) walked away with the plaque (which can be seen at your union office). The first back-to-back winners—Dole Court "Dawgs" (Jeff Honor, Tony Avery, Sherri Sharp, and Dean Looker) held on to 2nd; and South Station "Strikers" (Ralph Ramirez, Les Shaw, Mike Zaragoza, and Andrew Garcia) moved up to take 3rd.

I made this announcement at the tournament: I am letting South's Ralph Ramirez take over! Even though I do get help every year, I want to take a couple years off to actually enjoy myself during the tournament. So, Ralph got a little taste being my co-host of his duties next year. Once again, I would like to thank everyone for their support and hope that they give Ralph the same support. To Ralph: I am there for anything you need on the next one.

I would like to thank everyone who participated this year and hope that you had a blast.



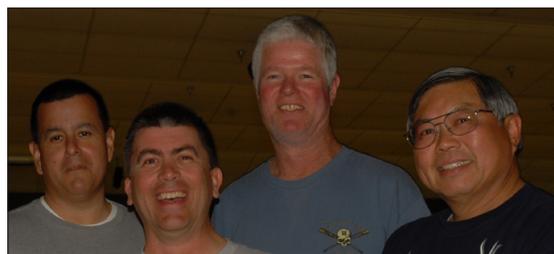
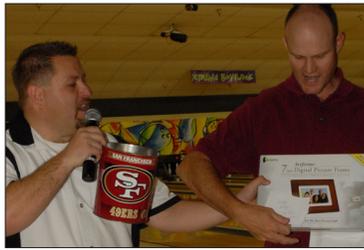
Congratulations to East Bakersfield on winning the Fourth annual "Battle of the Stations"! Many pictures were taken and can be seen on the Branch 782 website. Look for it at: "www.782nalc.com". Then, just click on the "Harrington Corner" link.

Ralph Ramirez would love some feed back on your likes and dislikes to make the next "Battle of the Stations" a bigger and better experience!

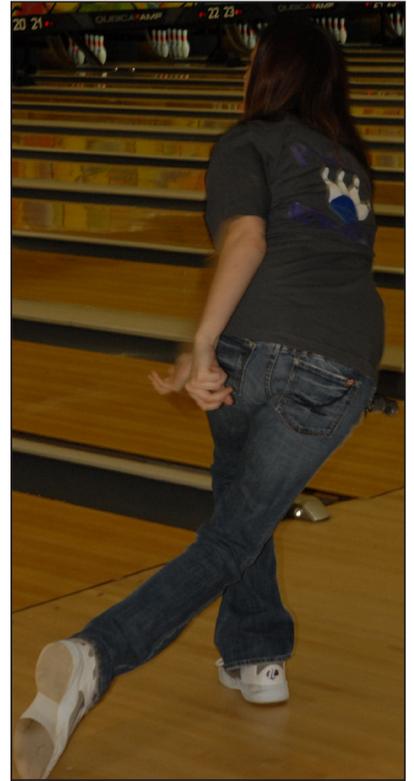
JEFF HARRINGTON
"Another Day in Paradise"









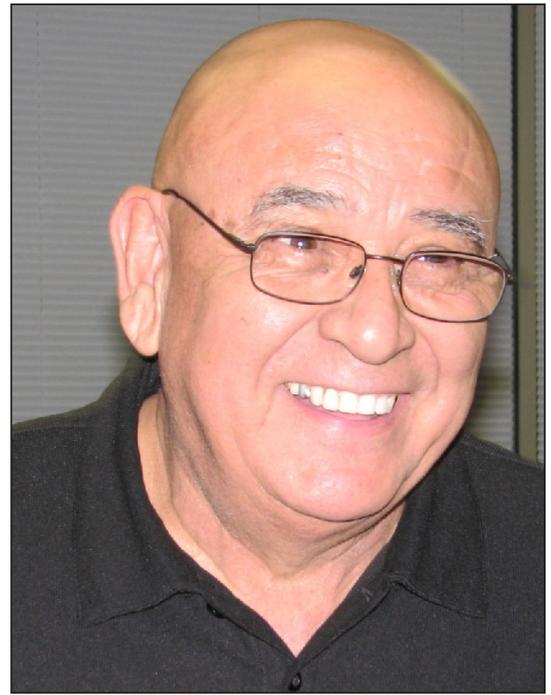


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Do YOU Have an idea for an "Out There" cartoon?? *

**Fred Acedo
BR. 782 S.A.N.E.
P.O. Box 6532
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OUT THERE



**** Remember—you never know what you might get...**



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

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