

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update

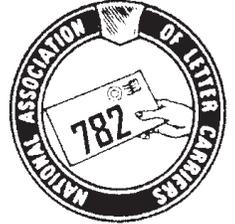


ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO



CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891

WEB VERSION

APRIL 2013

Taking it to the Street?

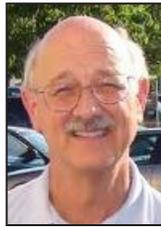
NALC was there then...



We were there in 2013!!



at the Mike:



The last four weeks have not only been extremely busy for our Branch Officers but also very stressful for *all* Letter Carriers. There was the day of action in March. The Local Memorandums of Understandings for all the cities are currently being negotiated. The Delano Post Office is in the process of doing full six-day count and inspections. The Food Drive is just around the corner.



I want to take the time to thank all the Carriers as well as their families and friends who cared enough and took the time on Sunday, March 24, to attend the Day of Action in Fresno. Diana Herrera and Vice-President John Ortega did an outstanding job of working out the details for the trip to Fresno. I was proud that we had such a good response from the members. I believe the turnout across the nation on the day of action contributed to the recent decision by the Board of Governors to postpone eliminating Saturday delivery.



A number of Branch Officers have been working long hours, not only in the evenings—but also on Sundays—to prepare and meet with the postmasters in the sixteen cities represented by our Branch to negotiate the Local Memorandum of Understandings. The LMOUs could only be negotiated during the month of April. I also want to thank all Stewards who stated that they would help in any way I needed them to. I particularly want to thank Vice-President John Ortega, Branch Recording Secretary Kim Gerdes, and Shop Steward Mike Meza for their support and assistance during all the negotiations! Not a single time did any one of them say they would not be able to help even when it meant that we had to spend the entire day in Mojave or when we had to spend until 11:00 P.M. on a Friday night negotiating a local contract. Without their help and dedication we would not have been able to get it done.

Unfortunately, with everything happening at once we have not been able to focus as much as we should on the Food Drive. Luckily, we have Dole Court Shop Steward Shari Sharpe and Shafter Shop Steward Norma Hamer!!! They have taken on the responsibility of the Food Drive for our Branch. They have spent a lot of time getting everything organized with very little support from management.

Every day we hear another rumor concerning the mail processing being moved from Bakersfield to Santa Clarita and the elimination of Saturday delivery.

The Postmaster General doesn't seem to even remember what he even says anymore. In the July 19, 2011 issue of *USA Today* PMG Donahoe was asked about the long term. He stated "At some point, we'll have to move to three days a week of mail delivery, possibly in 15 years." Yet, on April 3, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe recorded a "State of the Postal Service" video, to "...address a couple of mixed messages that need to be cleared up..." In that video, he said, "...Just amazes me, People say, well, first it's five day [mail delivery], then it's going to be four, three, two and one. Unless their routes have no mail in them, I don't know how in the world you would deliver less than five days a week."

It is time for Congress to realize that something has to be done to give the Postal Service relief from the burdensome pre-funding mandate they implemented in 2006. Our Branch will be sending three of our members—John Ortega, Diana Herrera and Pam Smith—to Washington at the end of April as part of the California delegation to lobby our Congressman.

Finally, I want to congratulate not only a long-time personal friend of mine, but also my "lunch buddy" Stephanie MacLaughlin. She retired on the first of April after 36 years!! It just won't be the same at Dole Court without her. But all of us who know her know that we *will* be able to find her at her favorite store: Home Goods.

I hope to see everyone at the next general meeting on April 23 at 7:00 p.m..



MIKE TOWERY
Branch 782 President

NALC President Fredric Rolando statement on USPS Board of Governors announcement



April 10, 2013 —NALC President Fredric Rolando issued the following statement today, in response to the USPS Board of Governors' announcement that the Postal Service will obey the law and comply with the continuing resolution adopted in March that mandates continuation of six-day mail delivery this year. The Board restated its support for a change to 5-day delivery, but effectively conceded that the postmaster general's claim that he could ignore the CR was wrong.

tomers away and do more harm than good. The Postal Service needs a growth strategy and the Congress must enact comprehensive reform that overhauls the USPS governance structure, provides greater pricing and product flexibility and reduces or eliminates the crushing pre-funding burden that has caused more than 90 percent of this year's financial loss so far.

sign that the Postal Service needs new executive leadership. Asking the NALC to renegotiate a contract that was just settled in January is insulting and unnecessary. The new agreement, which reduced starting pay by twenty-five to thirty-three percent and allows for major health care savings, provides for several labor-management task forces to work on ways to increase revenues and cut costs.



"Maintaining Saturday delivery is critical to the Postal Service's future. Losing this competitive advantage would not only reduce mail volume and revenue—sending the USPS on a death spiral—but also would disproportionately affect small businesses, the elderly, rural communities, the one-half of the public that pays bills by mail and the many millions who

"Finally, I must credit the hard work of letter carriers, whose efforts to get the message out about Saturday delivery were critical to today's positive development. We will continue to rely on our members as the fight to protect and preserve the U.S. Postal Service continues."

NALC President Fredric Rolando issued the following statement today



"NALC is gratified that the Board of Governors has seen the light on the law—but it is time for them to reconsider their entire "shrink to survive" strategy. Degrading the Postal Service's last-mile network is a losing strategy. Eliminating Saturday service, which more than a third of all business mailers want to keep, will drive millions of cus-

tomers away and do more harm than good. The Postal Service needs a growth strategy and the Congress must enact comprehensive reform that overhauls the USPS governance structure, provides greater pricing and product flexibility and reduces or eliminates the crushing pre-funding burden that has caused more than 90 percent of this year's financial loss so far.

"The Board's call to reopen and renegotiate the postal labor contracts is yet another



Unions & Community Allies Join Letter Carriers in Their Fight to Save Saturday Mail Delivery

by John Beaumont, President
California State Association
of Letter Carriers

Just on the merits, it's a disastrous idea. The Postmaster General proposes trading 17% of service for 2% in savings - an irrational business plan. Indeed, when the USPS asked the agency's overseer, the Postal Regulatory Commission, in 2011 to support ending six-day delivery, this illogic was one of the factors cited by the commission in declining to endorse the plan.

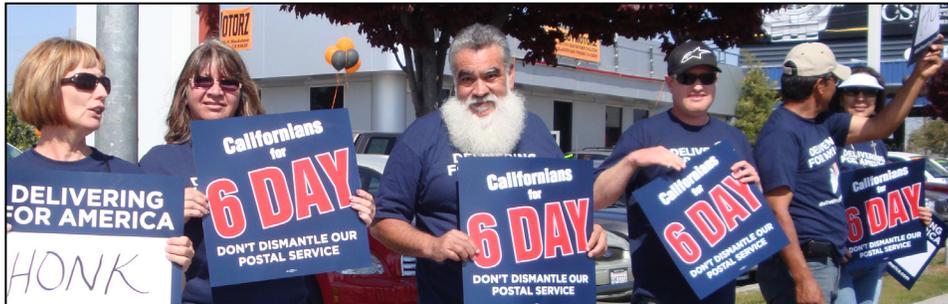
So too was the finding that the potential cost savings of eliminating Saturday delivery were wildly inflated. The Postal Regulatory Commission also noted that ending Saturday delivery would disproportionately affect the elderly, rural communities and small businesses. Those small businesses create more than two-thirds of all jobs in this country, and forcing them to hire expensive private contractors on weekends would impose new costs. In truth, ending Saturday delivery would jeopardize the USPS' future by sacrificing its competitive advantage and hurt tens of millions of Americans - and it wouldn't even solve the agency's financial woes.

That's because most of the red ink has nothing to do with postal operations and nothing to do with tax increase. Rather, 80% of the red ink stems directly from the 2006 congressional mandate that the Postal Service do something no other agency or company, federal or not, is required to do: pre-fund future retiree health benefits. That mandate accounted for \$11.1 billion in red ink in the Postal

Service's fiscal year 2012 alone.

The rally participants continued to remind the public that it is their Post Office and not one that is being pushed to ruin by a Postal Board of Governors and Postmaster General bent on destroying the very public institution they were sworn to protect. Postmaster General Donahoe should address with Congress the financially burdensome pre-funding mandate of future retiree health benefits, rather than seek to override his authority by gutting a network that provides our nation's residents and businesses with the world's most efficient and affordable delivery service while uniting this vast country.

The National Association of Letter Carriers would like to thank all our brothers and sisters from other unions across the state, as well as our community allies, for helping us deliver the truth at last Sunday's rally. Together, we can work to protect the future so this will not be the end of the Postal Service, but rather the beginning of a Postal Service that can thrive and prosper into the next century and beyond.



Over the past couple of months, lead stories on every media outlet across this nation have covered the "gloom and doom" angle of six-day postal delivery. But on March 24, 2013, thousands of Letter Carriers, union members and allies in California came out to set the story straight on the real crisis that is facing the United States Postal Service.

In San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno and San Francisco, rally participants let the communities they serve know that if the overzealous plan by Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe to eliminate Saturday mail delivery is allowed to happen, it would be one of the biggest mistakes our government would ever make.

Rally participants set the facts straight by letting everyone know that regardless of what he has been threatening to do, **Postmaster Donahoe lacks the legal authority to implement this plan on his own.** Decisions on delivery schedule are the purview of Congress—and every year for the past 30 years—America's elected representatives have mandated six-day delivery - a requirement remaining in force today.

Regardless of what a few misguided members of Congress have recently stated, Mr. Donahoe isn't above the law. Furthermore, his attempted power grab flouts the political will of Congress. As recently as January, a bipartisan majority of representatives co-sponsored measures backing continuation of Saturday mail delivery.



Johnny on the Spot



It has been a very busy April for Branch 782. We are in the middle of Local Contract Negotiations. Every time a new National Agreement is completed, the Local Memorandums Of Understanding are open for negotiating. The LMOU's consist of 22 Items that either party may open for negotiation. The period to negotiate the LMOU's is from April 1st thru April 30th. This is the **ONLY** time frame that we have to complete the negotiations. Our Branch covers 16 offices, each with it's own separate LMOU (15 Mojave and Cal City are covered under the same LMOU. President Towery has worked tirelessly to ensure we are prepared for the process.

We received some good news on April 10th . The Postal Service Board of Governors decided to have the PMG Donohoe follow the law and back off on his ill advised plan to move us to 5 day delivery. While we were successful in holding him off this time, I don't think it will be the last time we face this obstacle.

Thanks to the many of you who participated in the 6 day rallies. After the rallies, the PMG appeared in one of his service talk videos. Basically he was trying to smooth over some of the suggestions that after 5 day we would reduce service further to 4 day, 3 day etc. He was almost convincing...



stating that the country's needs would not allow him to go below the 5-day model.

Too bad only a short while back he went on record stating that within the next 15 years we would be delivering 3 days a week. Here are some other numbers you may find interesting. Publicly, the Postal Service has blamed its financial woes on a waning interest in old-fashioned mail (exacerbated by the financial crisis). And, it has cited that reason when it announced staff reductions, about a quarter of its workforce, or 150,000 postal jobs by 2016.

But some in the postal industry say that declining mail is just an excuse: "There is red ink, but the overwhelming share has nothing to do with mail volume, the Internet, or other factors related to the mail," says Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers. The retiree health payments account for nearly 80%, or \$9.2 billion, of the first three quarters' losses, and they "not only have exhausted the Postal Service's profits, savings and borrowing authority, they also have distracted the USPS from addressing the structural issues that do indeed exist as society changes. The Postal Regulatory Commission has recommended that the health care payments—the result of a congressional mandate passed in 2006, before the Postal Service's problems started—be reduced to alleviate the burden. There is one massive roadblock: the federal budget. Because the retiree health prefunding payments are counted in federal funds, they are tied into the nation's budget, which some experts say amounts to the USPS subsidizing government operations. "So the Postal Service has been a kind of cash cow for the federal government for the last 40 years," says Postal Regulatory Commission chairman Ruth Goldway.

On Aug. 1 the Postal Service did not pay its \$5.5 billion annual retiree health benefits bill, and announced that it's likely to default on the next payment, too due Sept. 30. While the announcement raised red

flags of concern for the welfare of retiring postal workers, experts, including postal employee unions, contend that the retirees will be fine—or may even be better off—if the USPS doesn't pay another cent into the fund for a long time.

Postal Service Inspector General David Williams wrote a letter to the Senate earlier this year recommending just that: eliminating the annual payments and letting the \$44 billion fund grow with interest.

Despite the Postal Service's debt, its retiree benefit coffers are beyond full.

Its pension funds are more than 100% funded, compared with 42% for all federal pension funds and 80% for the average Fortune 1000 pension plan. That "astoundingly high figure," according to Williams, amounts to a "war chest" of resources that will take care of older workers for decades to come.

The Postal Service increasingly relies on outside corporations for everything from sorting mail and transporting it by air and ground to advertising and I.T. consulting: Last year, the agency spent more than \$12 billion on such contracts, according to Husch Blackwell, a law firm that represents Postal Service contractors.

The USPS even hires some of its competitors to help it do its job, including the United Parcel Service and FedEx, which was the Postal Service's highest-paid supplier in 2011.

"The postal service essentially has privatized everything but the last mile of delivery," Goldway says. There is now a thriving industry of third-party companies contracting with the USPS—including large publicly traded corporations such as presorting mail firm Pitney Bowes.

When the USPS issued a special line of Simpsons stamps in 2009 and 2010, the

commemorative postage bearing Bart's and other characters' yellow faces might have looked cute, but they didn't sell. More than 68% of the inventory went to waste—an

expense of \$1.2 million. Last year, ten Postal Service products and services failed to pull in enough revenue to cover their costs, amounting to a loss of \$1.6 billion, according to the PRC's compliance report.



As I sit and enjoy the bus ride back to the union hall, I look around and a few people are already settled into the “little nap” for the ride home. The march that was held today was for an important cause. I am proud to have been able to attend this. I was even able to bring along my husband, Robert. I believe I heard the total of attendees to be over 300 people!

As we stood out on the corners and walked along the streets of Clovis, many people honked in support of saving 6-day delivery.

Many people just drove by. In some vehicles, I could



see the drivers of a few cars push away the hands of their front passengers from pounding on the steering wheel; some of the passengers were able to make it to the horn, some not. Some drivers shook their heads. One even showed “The Bird”. That right there tells me that there are some real uninformed, uncaring individuals out there.



Sure, it would be great to have two days off in a row. But look at all the jobs that would be lost. It’s not just City Letter Carriers jobs. It’s the Rural Carriers, the Clerks, the Mail Handlers, the Truck Drivers, the Mechanics; the list goes on and on and will also affect the people outside of the post office.

If you think that for some reason it isn’t going to affect you, think again. If you receive



mail, it is going to affect you. If you are a Regular Carrier and you think your job won’t be affected, think again, It will affect you. If they go to 5-day delivery, they could go to 4-day... Then? You lose your benefits because you are no longer a full-time employee. Then, they could go to 3-day. What will stop them? *Your voice. Your action.*



What are **YOU** doing? Are **YOU** helping with the fight? Are **YOU** writing your letters to your Congressman? Or are **YOU** sitting back watching? Get involved, union member or scab, get involved. Your job could be on the line.

In Solidarity,

NORMA HAMER
Shafter Shop Steward

For more about the March 24th Day of Action, check out the web version of our newsletter at WWW.782NALC.COM..



Thank You to Everyone who gave time and energy to making our voices heard on March 24, 2013! We were a part of the larger "Carriers in a Common Cause"!



Blue + Brown = Green

by Frank Salazar, President
NALC Branch 2902

compete on an even playing field with our major competitors.

PMG Donahoe Flips His Lid and Throws a Tantrum

Well, well, well, this catchy little phrase was brought to us by Postmaster General Donahoe and his lackeys at L'Enfant Plaza. It seems like blue (USPS) doing business with brown (United Parcel Service) equals green (dollars) for everyone. So, if both companies are making lots of money, it's a good thing right?

Well, knowing Postal Management, this is not a good deal for the Postal Service. It's a better deal for UPS, which doesn't have the delivery infrastructure of the USPS. The USPS's last mile delivery network is the best in the world and moves more mail in one day than some countries move in a month.

UPS has no interest in "universal delivery", because in a business sense it's not profitable. UPS is a business not a government service. UPS loses money delivering to rural areas and the suburbs. Like their non-Union competitor FEDEX, they would rather skim the cream by picking up and making deliveries in large cities and metropolitan areas where the profits are higher and the deliveries are dense.

They would rather add postage to an item and have the Postal Service deliver it to a suburb or a rural area. It would actually save UPS money and they could brag that they deliver there too. So, who would make more money in this deal, USPS or UPS?

When you hear the words, "Private/Public Partnership" think fancy words for privatization, because this is the end game that the far-right, Tea-Party, anti-government, anti-union, right-to-work-for-less types are thinking of.

A bunch of policy wonks over at the National Academy of Public Administration got together and wrote a white paper entitled "Restructuring the U.S. Postal Service". In a nut shell, the paper calls for the privatization of the Postal Service. The wonks call for privatizing everything

except the "last mile of delivery". The paper calls for privatizing all transportation (local and long haul), all retail outlets, all processing plants, and half of collections. The paper goes on to argue how swell everything would be and how lower costs would be, if everything except delivery was contracted out.

Pretty rosy picture, huh? The authors of the paper also go on to write that the root cause of the Postal Service crisis is the historic change in how we communicate; really? The authors state that the economic down turn was not the cause. USPS Management is not the cause? And, that the congressional mandate to prefund the future retirees health benefits to the tune of \$5.5 billion is not the cause.

Rather, it's the "historic change in how we communicate". Hmmm, ok, so the USPS survived the "Civil War", two "World Wars", the "Great Depression", the "Great Recession", and many smaller ones. The USPS also survived the telegraph, the telephone, the fax machine, the internet, the cell phone, e-mail, instant messaging, and texting, which are all ways to communicate. Taking this all into consideration, I opine that their thesis is bull!

What is killing the United States Postal Service is Congress and their failure and inability to work together to rescind or reduce the pre-funding mandate, and to refund the overpayments into CSRS and FERS along with their hamstringing of the ability of the Postal Service to

Looks like PMG Donahoe has been having a bad year so far. I don't know why? It should be his year: The Year of the Snake! The PMG didn't get what he wanted out of our arbitration decision. The PMG wanted a pay freeze, he wanted to get rid of the COLAs, he wanted a large low paid, low or no benefit workforce, and he *really, really, really* wanted the ability to lay people off and contract out delivery routes.

You see the Postmaster General has no vision for the Postal Service but to cut, cut, and cut some more.

The Postal Board of Governors has been pushing the PMG to make some savings. Hell, the PMG just saved them over \$10 billion by defaulting on the pre-funding requirement. But, this is not enough.

So, instead of standing up to the Board and working with the craft unions, PMG Donahoe wants to break the law, thumb his nose at Congress, and decide to cut a day of delivery. "Why not?", the PMG might say to himself. "Congress didn't do anything when I failed to pony up \$10



or \$11 billion. So, why not go to 5-day delivery? Congressmen Issa and Coburn got my back. If nothing else, I got everybody's attention now. And, if everything goes south, I'm eligible to retire with a fat pension and I can get a consulting job with a right-wing think tank or with a potential postal privatizer or competitor like UPS." PMG Donahoe did give UPS a lot of business and he did give most of our air transportation business to FEDEX. The FEDEX deal is worth billions of dollars.

Well, I think the PMG forgot about the NALC, the other labor unions, and the American public who want 6-day delivery...

Hold the Applause

It was disappointing to hear that when Management showed the video of the PMG's news conference and gave the stand-ups that the PMG wanted to go to 5-day delivery by August 5th that some of you actually clapped and wanted to go to 5-day delivery. I'm pretty sure that those of you who clapped most likely clapped out of ignorance. So, have you really thought what would happen, if we went to 5-day delivery?

First of all, who told you that you would have Saturday and Sunday off? The PMG stated that we would still deliver parcels on Saturday, and he's talking about delivering parcels in the evening and maybe on Sunday too.

And, who would deliver the parcels on Saturday, Sunday, or in the evenings?

Hmmm, how about the CCA's? Well, if we go 5-day, we won't need as many CCA's. So, there is a good chance, if you just got hired as a CCA, that you would be terminated for lack of work.

How about the PTF's? Well, Management can't use a PTF, if they are on an opt, unless, of course, management wants to use lots of overtime.

But, what will happen when there are no more PTF's? Forced overtime on your day off and every other day you work? Hmmm...

And, where are we going to get all these extra vehicles? Our vehicles are aging and already falling apart.

Secondly, under our current Local Memorandums Of Understanding's and National Agreement, if T-6 assignments are abolished due to a lack of need, because we are 5-day, Article 41.3.O kicks in and everything in your building junior to the most senior T-6 goes up for installation wide bidding. See that nice 8 hour route you fought so hard to get and maintain with all those nice, friendly, generous customers? You may no longer be servicing them or delivering in that part of the city. In fact, you could lose your route, end up unassigned, and be excessed to another installation miles and miles away.

You know of course that we need to get rid of 1/6th of our workforce, if we go 5-day.

Thirdly, you realize that every week will be a holiday week. And, what happens when everyone is a Regular and not very many people are on the overtime list, because we are all tired of working overtime? Remember when there were not enough PTF's and TE's to help out? Remember those long hot 10-12 hour days in the summer heat or those cold winter days out in the wind, rain and dark? I don't think there will be many CCA's to go around.

And, what do you think will happen when a holiday actually comes around? Do you honestly think we are going to be off three days in a row?

Lastly, the PMG does not have a plan to grow the company. His solution is to cut. If he cuts Saturday mail delivery out, we might save some money, but I don't believe Management's savings estimates. We will probably lose

more market share to the competition, because mail service will be delayed in many parts of the country. Which in turn, would mean less volume or more lower priced pieces coming into the system.

This would in turn require cutting more days out of the week, shutting more plants, and requiring less people. Less volume means lower revenues.

OUT THERE



Lower revenues means more cuts. More cuts leads to bigger routes and possibly losing the monopoly on the mailbox, since we are not delivering mail every day. Bigger routes and more competition leads to fewer employees. It's a vicious downward spiral. The next time national negotiations come around expect no or lower pay raises, pay freezes, or higher costs for retirement and health care. If the Postal Service is still losing money, Management will most likely cut to 3 day delivery, 2 day delivery, one day delivery...and before you know it, we work for UPS, FEDEX, DHL, Wal-Mart, E-Bay or Amazon for lower wages and little or no benefits. It's kind of like 6-5-4-3-2-1 and done.

Next time around, think before you clap.

This is an excerpt from an article originally published in the Chatsworth, CA Branch 2902 Mail Bag News published in their prize-winning March-April 2013 issue.

Minutes of the March 2013 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 March, 2013 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, Darryl Holderman. All members of the Executive Board were present, except Treasurer, Molly Biggar. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; S.A.N.E., Fred Acedo; Photographer, Anita Holderman; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes; Asst. Treasurer, Debbie Guillet and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes of the February 26, 2013 meeting were read by Asst. Recording Secretary, Mabel Bullis and accepted as read with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Whitney Moreci, Gina Maples, Salvador Garcia, Leslie Munoz, Josiah Sanchez, Francisco Ramirez, Raul Castillo, Mayra Alvidrez, Mallaurie Fletcher, Francisco Herrera Jr., Luis Ruiz and Jason Boutwell.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Theresa Ortega reported that the picnic is "right on schedule." Basil Zuniga reported that last month was South Station's turn and they managed to get it done without him; next month will be Hillcrest Stations turn. Brundage and East Bakersfield will share the "duties". Frank Martinez reported that there will be a softball tournament on Memorial weekend. Mabel Bullis reported that we sold one book this month for a total of 1259, with 1241 left to sell. Basil will try to attend the general meeting of Visalia Branch 866 to sell the book.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: John Ortega reported that 65 members from Bakersfield, Porterville and Visalia attend the rally in Fresno; there was a good turnout with approximately 350 attending the rally. He thanked Legislative Rep., Diana Chavez for organizing the bus. He also reported that National will help cover the cost of the bus. Basil Zuniga shared that the customers across the street from the post office volunteered their yard as a staging area, another allowed the use of their yard to BBQ and feed the members at

the rally, several business allowed members to use their restrooms. There was a lot of support from the community. Mike Towery reported that Delano is the only AO still scheduled for 6 day route counts and COR adjustments. Their counts will begin on April 13. He also reported that Local Negotiations will begin on April 1. He and the team will have to meet and negotiate Local Memorandum of Understanding for all 16 cities in our branch. All negotiations have to be completed by April 30th. There will be an Audit on April 10th and Budget meeting on April 17th, following the steward meeting. Norma Hamer reported that there will be a flyer sent to all offices to order Food Drive T-shirts. See the shop steward to place orders. Mark Ramirez shared with members the framed copy of the newsletter with the poem he wrote about Vincent Sombrotto. He has written National to request that Manny Peralta present it to Mrs. Sombrotto. Mike Towery reported that a grievance was settled in Pre-Arb, a clerk from Lancaster was sent to Ridgecrest to carry mail. The ODL carriers in Ridgecrest will be paid for every hour that the Lancaster clerk carried mail. Mike recognized retiree Dicie Wilder who just celebrated her 70th birthday and Stephanie MacLaughlin who will retire on April 1st. Mike reported that there was a meeting for the CCA's, some still have not joined the union. Mark Ramirez shared that Mike Towery is a great branch president, he presented President, Mike Towery will a framed color copy of the poem he wrote honoring him.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$11,609.41 was collected for the month.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Bigger reported:

Beginning Income	\$72,181.60
Dues and Income	\$11,428.05
Interest Income	\$ 5.26
Total Balance	\$83,614.91
Total Expenses	\$10,680.96
Ending Balance	\$72,933.95

The 50/50 Drawing was won by Mark Ramirez.

The Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Yuri Garcia if she had been present.

There were 41 members present and one guest member from Ohio.

The meeting adjourned at 7:42.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Editor-guy Note: With an event as large as this, I am thankful that so many people stepped forward to provide a pictorial memory of what went on during the rally on March 24th. Special, special thanks go out to the following individuals who made this possible: Gary Bottoms and Donald Smith from Fresno NALC Branch 231 and Judy Kiyoshi and Pam Smith from NALC Branch 782!!! Thank you so very, very much! I've mixed and matched your pix and lost track of how to credit you with each and every picture. Mea culpa! More importantly...thank you to the folks who invested their time and energy to make this a fun and successful day!!!

NON-MEMBER LIST JANUARY 2013

*If we all don't stick together now,
there's going to be no one left to
blame... We ALL should be Carriers
in a Common Cause. Really? YES!!*

AVENAL (93203)
100% UNION!!!

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

ARVIN (93209)
100% UNION!!!

STOCKDALE (93309)
J. Oh

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

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

LAMONT (93241)
100% UNION!!!

MOJAVE (93501)
100% UNION!!!

McFARLAND (93250)
100% UNION!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY (93504)
100% UNION!!!

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

BORON (93516)
100% UNION!!!

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

EDWARDS AFB (93526)
100% UNION!!!

WASCO (93280)
100% UNION!!!

TRONA (93562)
100% UNION!!!

DOWNTOWN (93301)
S. Kirby
J. Cruz

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

**SOUTH STATION
(93304)**
100% UNION!!!

**EAST BAKERSFIELD
(93305)**
100% UNION!!!

HILLCREST (93306)
100% UNION!!!

BRUNDAGE (93307)
D. Kinglee



**We are an "Open Shop".
MEMBERSHIP IS VOLUNTARY.
366 Letter Carriers are in the complement
assigned to cities represented by
our Branch. ONLY 17 ARE NON-MEMBERS.
We are 95.4% organized!**



We were there in 2013!!

2013 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CVS/CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CVS/CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)	(661) 631-8520
LabCorp Lab Services	(661) 631-9258
Shared Services (Retirees Info!!!)	(661) 477-3273

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

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

*** NALC Drug Prescription Program is MANDATORY generic (unless specified by your doctor, at additional cost to member). Preferred retail pharmacy 1st and 2nd fills, you pay 20% of cost of generic/30% of name brand/45% non-formulary. MAIL ORDER/CVS PRESCRIPTIONS (when NALC is primary): 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand, \$58 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand, \$80 non-formulary; **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary) Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of formulary, 30% non-formulary. **MEDICARE PRIMARY** (mail order); 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 formulary, \$52 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$10 generic, \$55 formulary, \$70 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$4 for NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$4 for NALCSENIOR generic (certain drugs); NALCSENIOR generic antibiotics are available **FREE** for a 30 day supply, when Medicare is primary (certain antibiotics only).*

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

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

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

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

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

Some Websites for You...

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

Accupuncture!! Must be a state licensed or certified accu-puncturist. Chiropractic! State licensed chiropractor or D.O.

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

I Can See This Happening...

If you didn't see this on "The Tonight Show", I hope you're sitting down when you read it. This is probably the funniest date story ever, first date or not!!! We have all had bad dates, but **this** takes the cake!!

Jay Leno went into the audience to find the most embarrassing first date that a woman ever had. The winner described her worst first date experience.

There was absolutely no question as to why her tale took the prize!

She said it was midwinter... Snowing and quite cold...and the guy had taken her skiing in the mountains outside Salt Lake City, Utah.

It was a day trip (no overnight). They were strangers, after all, and had never met before. The outing was fun, but relatively uneventful until they were headed home late that afternoon.

They were driving back down the mountain, when she gradually began to realize that she should not have had that extra latte... They were about an hour away from anywhere with a rest room and in the middle of nowhere. Her companion suggested she try to hold it—which she did for a while. Unfortunately, because of the heavy snow and slow going, there came a

point where she told him that he had better stop and let her go beside the road, or it would be on the front seat of his car.

They stopped and she quickly crawled out beside the car, yanked her pants down and started. In the deep snow she didn't have good footing, so she let her butt rest against the rear fender to steady herself. Her companion stood on the side of the car watching for traffic and indeed was a real gentleman and refrained from peeking. All she could think about was the relief she felt despite the rather embarrassing nature of the situation.

Upon finishing however, she soon became aware of another sensation. As she bent to pull up her pants, the young lady discovered her buttocks were firmly glued against the car's fender. Thoughts of tongues frozen to poles immediately came to mind as she attempted to disengage her flesh from the icy metal. It was quickly apparent that she had a brand new problem due to the extreme cold.

Horrified by her plight and yet aware of the humor of the moment, she answered her date's concerns about, "What is taking so long?" with a reply that, indeed, she was "freezing her butt off" and in need of some assistance! He came around the car as she tried to cover herself with her sweater

and then (as she looked imploringly into his eyes) he burst out laughing. She too, got the giggles and when they finally managed to compose themselves, they assessed her dilemma. Obviously, as hysterical as the situation was, they were also faced with a real problem.

Both agreed it would take something hot to free her chilly cheeks from the grip of the icy metal... Thinking about what had gotten her into the predicament in the first place, both quickly realized that there was only one way to get her free. So, as she looked the other way, her first time date proceeded to unzip his pants and to pee her butt off the fender.

As the audience screamed in laughter, she took "The Tonight Show" prize hands down. Or perhaps that should be 'pants down'. And you thought *your* first date was embarrassing? Jay Leno's comment: "This gives a whole new meaning to being pissed off."

Oh... And how did the first date turn out? He became her husband and was sitting next to her on Leno's show!

If you laughed at this, pass it on.

Remember, if you haven't got a smile on your face and laughter in your heart, then you are just a sour old fart!

Have a Great Day—unless you've made other plans...

Three Old Retired Letter Carriers

Three old retired Letter Carriers are sitting on the porch of their retirement home. The first says, "Fellas, I got real problems. I'm seventy-five years old. Every morning at 7 a.m. sharp, I try to urinate. All day long, I try to urinate. They give me medicine, but nothing helps. The second old man says, "You think *you* have problems? Every morning at 8 a.m. sharp, I get up and try to make my bowels move. I try all day to have a bowel movement. They give me all kinds of stuff, but nothing helps." The third old Carrier says, "Fellas, I'm ninety-five years old. Every morning at 7:30 a.m. sharp, I urinate. At 8:30 a.m. sharp, I have a bowel movement. At 9 a.m. every morning, I wake up!"

RESURRECTION!

A church pastor is speaking to his congregation. He asks, "Can anybody here explain The Resurrection?" No one says a word. Finally, a young boy in the front row raises his hand. "Yes, young man, can you explain The Resurrection?" The boy says, "I don't know a lot, but on TV they said: 'If you have a resurrection that lasts for more than four hours, you should call a doctor.'"

It took a long, long time for the congregation to settle down that Sunday.

"A little humor in the morning can improve one's spirit, for the entire day!"

MARK RAMIREZ
Branch 782 NALC HBP Representative

*** S.A.N.E. FRED ***

Fred's off the chain,
He is in S. A. N. E.

For sure, there's one safe bet!
He does it all, at his home,
Without a safety net!

Some cartoons, we consider raw,
Drawn with too much Zip!
You'd laugh like hell,
But we can't print,
It's Basil's censorship!

OUT THERE



Fred Acedo has a phenomenal artistic talent that he shares with all members of the NALC! Branch 782 members may not realize that his "Out There" views of our world appear in many other NALC publications all across the country.



This poem by Mark Ramirez is a fitting tribute to a man who combines wit, insight and dedication in his gifts to each of us!

OUT THERE

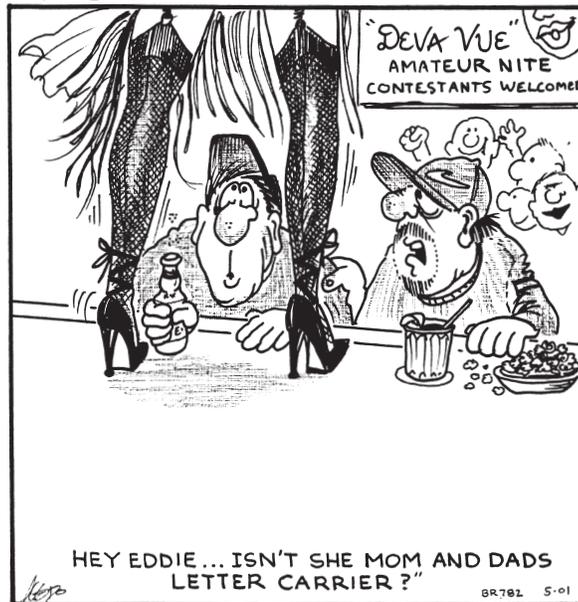


We can't restrict, nor tone him down,
Cuz, that would not be Fred!
His art is great, without the use,
Of hair upon his head!

Our Branch is blessed,
To have this gent,
He provides us, with such laughter!
He's so cool, and down to earth,
Fred's a genuine, "Old Master!"

by Mark Ramirez Branch 782 "Poet at Large"

OUT THERE



HEY EDDIE... ISN'T SHE MOM AND DADS LETTER CARRIER?"

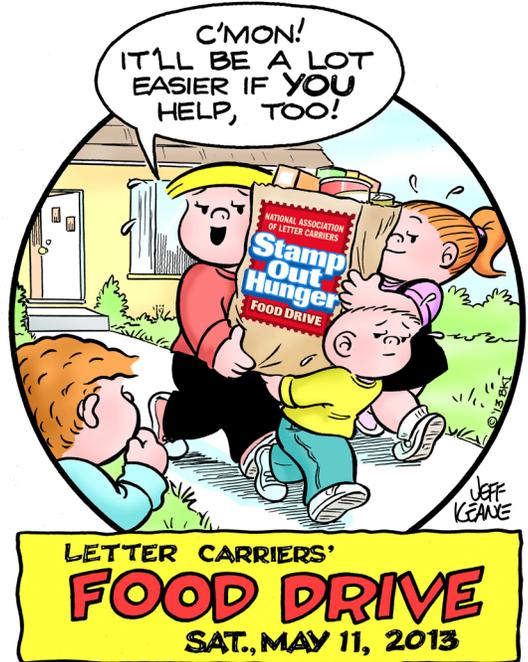
“GOOD HEARTS” WE KNOW! OUR BRANCH’S “DEDICATED DUO”

by Mark Ramirez Branch 782 “Poet at Large”

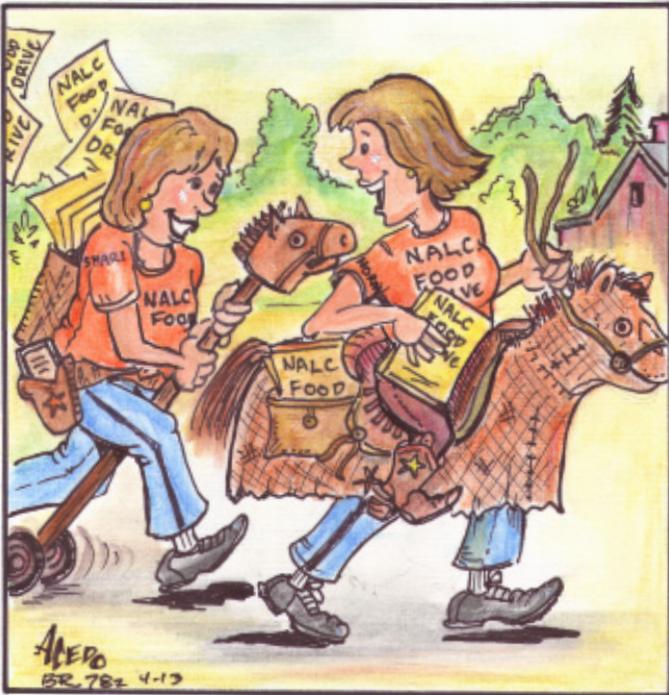
Norma and Shari volunteer their time,
Energize our Food Drive, don’t make a dime!
It’s always “YES!” and *NEVER* “No!”
They’re our Branch’s unselfish “Dedicated Duo!”

Our duo will ride their powerful steeds!
Passing out flyers—for our patrons to read!
It’s a national, one day, NALC event!
Soon after it’s collected, it’s all been spent!

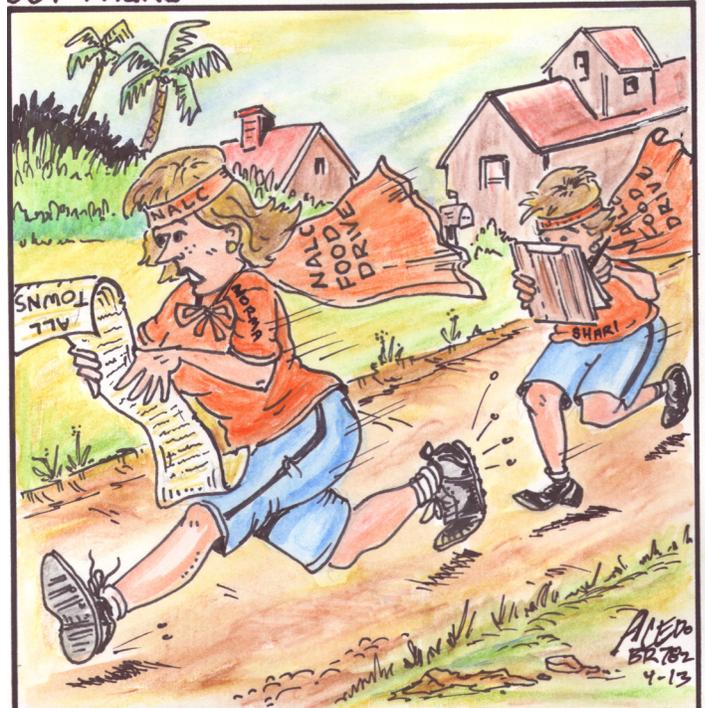
The NALC spirit, and the needy we bless!
Enables our Food Drive, to be a success!
Our Carriers and patrons answer the call!
Such sorrow because we’d love to feed them all!



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



It is estimated that 36 MILLION “Americans” go to bed hungry every night !!! Of those 36 million, *SIXTEEN MILLION ARE CHILDREN!!!* The National Association of Letter Carriers shows where their hearts are! It’s only a one day food collection—but it provides “FOOD” that would not otherwise be available in their community where it is collected!

“GOD BLESS OUR PATRONS...AND OUR LETTER CARRIERS!”

from the editor-guy

At a recent Branch 782 general meeting, retiree William "Luther" Lane reported that Ruby, his wife of sixty years, had passed away. He asked if it would be appropriate to have something in our newsletter about her. Of course!

Luther recalls that they met in 1948 at a wedding reception at St. Paul Church. After meeting, they just went their separate ways. Some time later, he noticed her again when she was riding her bike. They got to talking. He vividly recalls that she was fifteen years old and he was sixteen.

Ruby and Luther dated while attending Kern County Union High School and their relationship grew. In the years after high school they began to think about marriage.

During the Korean War—when Luther was 20—he received a special letter from the government. He and Ruby decided that joining together in matrimony made sense if he was going to be drafted.

They were married November 22, 1952.



Oh, that "draft thing"? After Luther reported to Ford Ord for basic training, he had an asthma attack and that was the

end of his military service. He returned to his new wife and they began an adventure together that would last 60 years and three months!

Following a short stint in Los Angeles where Luther says, "We lived there 'bout a minute..." , Ruby and Luther moved back to Bakersfield. He soon had a job with a pipe company working in the Edwards AFB area. However, the job

was dirty and very dusty. Not the best ingredients for someone with asthma. Luther recalls that the supervisor called him in to his office and told him that if he stayed , his health would suffer.

Luther knew he needed a better job.

While living in Los Angeles, Luther had worked for the Post Office as a Christmas temp. A supervisor suggested

Obituary

II Timothy 4:6-8

Although her proper name was Ruby, her family and friends called her Ophelia.

Ruby was born June 1, 1933 in Gladewater Texas to Tommie & Larhee Lee. She was the first of three siblings. At a young age she gave her heart to God and was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Ruby was outgoing she loved helping people. Ruby attended Weldon Elementary/Middle School in Texas and finalized her studies at Bakersfield High and graduated with high honors in 1951. She attended Bakersfield College and graduated with an Associate Degree in Child Development.

Ruby had many passions in life and two of them were cooking and sewing, while in the helping of rearing her younger siblings she learned to do these two very well. Ruby's careers were vast and the youth was always involved within the description she worked with the youth at the "Bakersfield Saints Track and Field" "Bakersfield City Schools" "The Black History Pageants" under the direction of Mary Patterson and she also was instrumental in the building of JM's Learning Center also being the director of Children's Church at the Jerusalem Mission Church, which was her final job. Ruby had stated, *"They'd put me under jail if I worked with the youth of today, so now is a good time for me to quit."*

Ms. Ruby possessed a anointing for grooming, educating and caring for the youth and that was her main passion.

In the interim of working and school, she met the love of her life William Luther Lane, Jr. at St. Paul Church. They were married in 1952 by the late Bishop C.N Rucker, and with four children, a host of jobs and 60 years later they were still together until her sunset.

In 2006 Ruby journeyed with her husband as God opened a way and set them on a path that would lead them to a group of His people that needed to be delivered.

That same year they departed Jerusalem Mission to begin their ministry work in "Deliverance Church of God in Christ." There motto: *"Because He had set us free to serve in spirit and in truth."*

It has now been over some years since the church has been in existence and God has blessed them greatly. Ruby was excited about working side-by-side in the Lord's vineyard.

Ruby was preceded in death by her parents Tommie & Larhee Lee. She leaves behind her husband of 60 years Luther Lane, her first born Gregory & (Pam) Lane , Second and only daughter Gwendolyn & (Thomas) May, Third, Erwin & (Felicia) Lane and her baby son Dwight & (Ime) Lane. Her siblings, Clarence & (Jackie) Lee, Rosie & deceased husband (Marvin) Cooper and host of Grand's and Great Grand Children, in-laws nieces nephews and cousin.

Ruby counted it a privilege to serve God and His people. She enjoyed being a wife, mother a sister and friend.

that he take the test for the Post Office if he ever had a chance.

Their first child, Gregory, was born in 1953 and Luther and Ruby knew that they were going to need to have steady work to support their growing family.

Luther got to thinking about that Post Office supervisor's advice after their return to Bakersfield. And Ruby's response? "Whatever you think is best, Babe!" And, Luther took that test.

In September 1955, the Post Office got a new employee.

Another important event happened in 1955: Gwendolyn was born in 1955. She was followed by Erwin in 1956 and Ruby's baby boy, Dwight, in 1958.

Ruby loved being a mother to "her babies" and was experienced with the life of big families. Her father had seven brothers and her mother came from a family of ten children! She knew that it was a lot of work, but that it would be a labor of love.

Speaking of labor, Luther shared some memories of his time as a Sub!

Usually, he would work twelve to fourteen hours a day at "The Annex" at 16th and Eye. There were many, many times that he worked a whole lot of sixteen hours days in succession! He was exhausted much of the time.

If you've read these words in this last paragraph, re-read them.

For a little perspective, try to put yourself in Luther's shoes: You have just finished your assigned duties for the day as a Letter Carrier. Think about how tired you are. Think about how you feel as you walk over to the clock to punch out and head home to relax. *Your* day is over, right?

Well, from 1955-1957 (when Luther was a Sub) things were different! **THIS** was *his* world: There was no overtime pay and he got to know the night supervisor pretty well...

When Luther checked in his accountables at the cage at the end of his Letter Carrier day, that night supervisor would be right there and direct him and other Subs over to the hand case where they would sort mail by states. They would then carry sacks of mail and stage them for transport to the train station where they would be loaded on the train for sorting and delivery as the trains travelled across the country. Or, they would work parcels. Or, they would do anything else that the supervisor required them to do until they finally clocked out *after working and working!!!*

One night, he remembered that he was probably "asleep on his feet" when he was carrying a sack of mail to be taken to the train. He walked off "the porch" and suddenly woke up—*while he was freefalling through the air*—and was able to somehow land on his feet! Luther smiled... "In those days, I was a little quicker than I am now!"

There is one sweet memory that Luther relishes. He came in from the street and that night supervisor wasn't in his usual location. Luther just checked in as quick as he could, grabbed his gear, clocked out, and headed home as fast as he could! Because "home" was where his sweetheart was.

Ruby was the reason he was able to persevere! She, and his children, gave him the strength to cope with all of the trials and tribulations.

Ruby shared much of his postal life with him. She woke up each and *every* morning to make him breakfast and fix something for his lunch. And, although Luther knew how to cook, his wife's cooking was something special! She was always there for him!

And, there was a silver lining to all of those long hours he was putting in. He would usually bring home over \$200 a paycheck when he was a Sub!

That really changed when he made Regular. His checks dropped to \$139. And, by then, Luther and Ruby had bought their first house. Their payments

were \$65 a month! Working side jobs, Luther was able to keep things together.

Together, Luther and Ruby did manage to do that as they raised their children and survived a Post Office career that spanned thirty-four years until Luther retired in 1989.



With her love of children as an incentive, Ruby enrolled in Bakersfield College and graduated with an Associate Degree in Child Development.

Luther and Ruby early on became involved in trying to make sure that they could protect the Rights and Benefits that they had. Luther was an active NALC member who was a convention delegate. When Luther attended NALC meetings at the Veterans' Hall on Mt. Vernon, Ruby would participate in the NALC Auxiliary meetings that were being conducted next door.

Luther admits that his "active" participation as an NALC activist tapered off when he found it difficult to reconcile his personal involvement with how much alcohol seemed to be consumed by convention delegates. His Christian beliefs and convictions were always the bedrock of his life. But, Luther insists that he never stopped believing in those goals which the NALC strived to achieve for all Letter Carriers!

Following retirement, Ruby and Luther enjoyed their travels to Europe, the Bahamas and other beautiful locations.

Luther has an aching sadness as he deals with day-to-day business. He misses his Ruby and her cooking and her wisdom. (He shared a story about how his desire to get some "free" manure led to a stay in the hospital, and a long period of therapy. Ruby warned him...) He misses her, but he knows that he will be joined with her again. And **THAT** is the best thing of all!!!

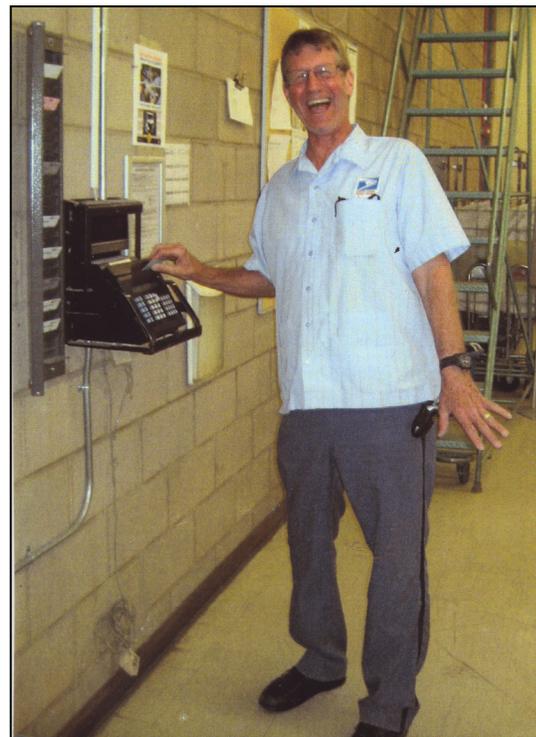
One Day at a Time... Leads to Another Day in Paradise, Baby!!

Congratulations, Hal! You have earned your “Last Punch”!! With all your hard work and dedication to the job, you will be hard to replace. There is *only* one Hal Mitchell!!

Looking for a career change—and liking the idea of working outside—Hal came to the Ridgecrest Post Office a little over 14 years ago. During those fourteen years, Hal worked under 4 Postmasters. He feels that the biggest change that he has seen is DPS and the financial condition of the Post Office. He feels that the Post Office will survive but that we will not recognize it in the future with possibly more parcel deliveries than mail deliveries. Hal also thinks that Congress will not allow five-day delivery.

If he could change one thing at the Post Office, it would be that management would show more respect and appreciation for all Letter Carriers. The one thing that he would not change is the dedication of our employees.

Out tHeRe



Hal Mitchell joins the “Last Punch Bunch”
on March XX, 2013

He is not going to miss trashcan days, coverage, bad weather and nasty customers. He feels the worst part of his job is all the politics. He will, however, miss his co-workers, most of his customers and being outside on the nice days. The best part of his job has been interacting with his fellow employees.

Hal is looking forward to being available to spend quality time with his family. Top of the List? Taking care of his wife, Carla, and encouraging her to get better. He is excited about getting to know his five grandchildren. Hal plans to stay in Ridgecrest and just enjoy life!!

In parting, Hal wanted to share with us that he enjoyed working for the Postal Service. He has met many wonderful people and will miss everyone. His advice to those of us who remain is to live life to the fullest. In the words of Hal, “One day at a time, Baby!”

To you, Hal, we *ALL* want to wish you “Another Day in Paradise!!” Wish all the best to you and Carla and your family. We *will* miss you!

LYNNEL HOWELL
Ridgecrest Shop Steward

Recently, my wife and I took a short ride up the hill to Tehachapi to do a little antiquing. There were only a couple of shops downtown to look through and we wondered if there were any more somewhere else in town.

My wife, Toni, spotted a Letter Carrier so we decided to ask her if she knew of any shops we could visit.

The Letter Carrier's name was Mary Morphis. She gave us a complete rundown on locations, directions, shop owners' names—and even the type of merchandise they carried!

Toni and I were so impressed with Mary's professional demeanor and her pleasant attitude.

I told her that I was a retired Letter Carrier and that I drew the "Out There" cartoons for our Branch. To my surprise, she called me by name and said she had bought one of the copies of the cartoon book and that she really enjoyed it.

At that moment, my chest swelled a little and it wasn't caused by my heart condition...

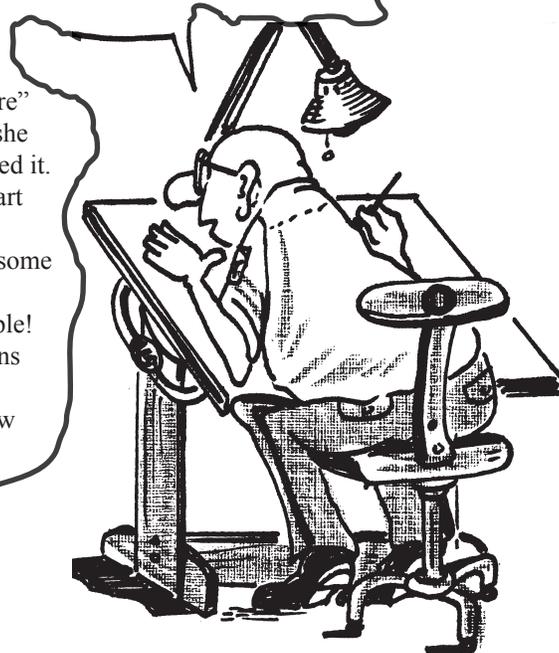
Toni and I visited the antique shops she suggested and came home with some treasures! We *never* would have found them without Mary's guidance.

It has occurred to me that Letter Carriers are more than just delivery people! We can be ambassadors of good will who can represent our cities and towns with pride.

Mary's pleasant and professional attitude is a good model for us to follow in our life and in our jobs!

Good Job, Mary!!!

FRED ACEDO
"Out There"
NALC Branch 782



VETERANS CORNER APRIL 2013

VETERANS - PLEASE TAKE NOTICE!

As part of VA's transformation efforts, it has become my understanding that the Veterans Administration are implementing people, process and technology initiatives to improve benefits delivery to Veterans – with the goal of improving accuracy and timeliness.

As of today the Veterans Administration has launched a new initiative called Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE). This is a joint venture between the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA). This program was first developed and piloted at VBA's St. Paul Regional Office and the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

During the pilot, ACE helped reduce the time to complete a Veteran's Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) from a national average of 25 days down to just 8 days—a time saving of more than two weeks.

ACE gives VHA the option to review a Veteran's existing medical records instead of performing an in-person or telehealth examination to complete a Veteran's Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ), expediting the disability ratings process by eliminating the wait time to schedule and conduct an in-person exam. Veteran's Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) is medical examination forms used to capture essential information for evaluating disability compensation or pension claims.

When a Veteran seeks compensation benefits, VA personnel review the claim to determine if additional medical information is necessary to render a disability rating. If a medical evaluation or opinion is needed, VBA submits a request initiating VHA to schedule an exam for rating purposes. Under the new process, VHA can complete a Veteran's Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) without a medical exam if a Veteran's existing medical records contain sufficient evidence.

ACE is one example of an improvement to VA's processes that will help us meet our goal to eliminate the claims backlog and provide more timely benefits to our Veterans, their families and survivors. To learn more about our transformation initiatives, visit our Transformation website: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/transformation/>

(Source Samantha O'Neil is a Communications Specialist with the Veterans Benefits Administration)

Thank you again from the NALC, Branch 3, and all of our members for your great personal sacrifice, vigilance and commitment to ensuring the security of our homeland and the preservation and promotion of freedom and justice for all people.

For further information or requests feel free to contact Mark Leon, Eastside NALC Shop Steward (716) 842-4752, e-mail address: MrR2Leon@aol.com; or contact Branch 3 at (716) 631-3940 or e-mail me at NALCB3@aol.com

Harrington's Spotlight

On Sunday March 17th, the Post Office held its inaugural local 3 vs. 3 basketball tournament at the Beardsley Junior High gym in Oildale. The gym started to fill up with basketball players with different skill sets warming up with stretching, jump shots, and lay ups. With final warm ups completed, there was eight teams in attendance.

If you don't have enough people to field a full team? 3-on-3 Basketball combines the convenience of pickup basketball with the intensity of Intramural t-shirt competition. The eight teams comprised of different stations that included Dole Court, South, Brundage, the GMF, and Shafter. We had a mixture of Mail Handlers, Clerks, Rural Carriers, and City Carriers. Each team was given two 30 minutes or first to score 30 pts games and was then placed in a 1 game elimination bracket based on the win/lose in those two games.

As the elimination games began, you could see the competitiveness flowing with good defense, pick-and-rolls, strong screens, outside 3 pointers, and of course a few wild shots taken. With each round concluding, team by team would be eliminated coming down to the final two teams which consisted of a 3 man team from the Plant and a 4 man team from mixed stations.

The Championship game came to be a great game to watch. Each team was 4-0. As the game went along, the lead went back and forth throughout the whole match. With time coming to an end, the game was tied 26-26. Preetpal Singh from the Mixed Stations hit his 5th three pointer of the game to take a

29-26 lead. The Plant came back quickly with a basket bringing the score to 29-28 with a next basket wins scenario.

The ball was inbounded and was quickly given to the HOT hand of Preetpal who got a screen from teammate Andrew Garcia and was able to take a shot from the free throw area that was missed; but, Preetpal was in position for a quick rebound tip in shot that ended the game with a 31-28 victory!

The Championship team consisted of Cesar Rivera (Brundage), Preetpal Singh (Plant), Andrew "The Hurricane" Garcia (South) and Ken Gill (Forgot).

Big Kudos for Dole Court Carrier Aaron Whitherspoon for taking the time to organize this event for the Post Office!

At this time, I want to give out a special thanks to my Successor South's Ralph Ramirez for putting on a great Bowling Tournament this year! A LOT of work goes into it and he has done a GREAT job the last 3 years.

I think a **BIG** thank you should go out to *all* of our sports Organizers: Dole Court's Glenn Ryder and Kevin Vandiver for Flag Football; South Station's Andrew Garcia for Softball, Dole Court's Aaron Witherspoon for Basketball; and ,once again, South's Ralph Ramirez for the Bowling Tournament.

A few people have mentioned to me recently, "How come we don't have Volleyball tournaments anymore?: You know what I tell them? "Find someone to Run it..." Any takers??"

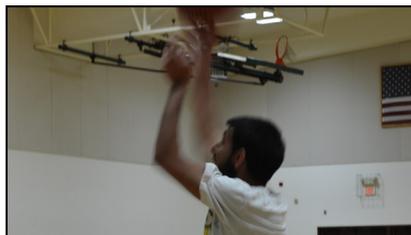
JEFF HARRINGTON 93305
"Just Another Day In Paradise"



People from East Bakersfield



Basketball Tournament



2013 Champs!!!



Pictures on these two pages by Jeff Harrington.

Little Known Rights of the OTDL

by Izaac Navarro,
NALC Branch 231

It's been brought to my attention that at some stations—let's say *most* stations—the supervisors have NO clue about the proper ways to maintain overtime equitability. Surprise, surprise! Here are a couple of issues I've been approached about recently that I'd like you to instill in your memory if you are an Overtime Carrier or thinking about being one.

The first is one I'm sure all OTDL carriers have encountered at least once probably in the last month. It deals with "missed opportunity", the way management perceives it; and, "The Contractual Way". Management would like you to believe that if they call you the morning of your non-scheduled day to work and you do not answer the phone then that day will be considered as eight hours of missed opportunity. They are wrong!

**M-00754 Pre-arb April 10, 1985,
H1N-3F-C 25958**

An employee who cannot be contacted to work on his/her nonscheduled day will not have that call recorded as a missed opportunity. The day in question also will not be counted as a day where the employee was available for overtime.

That says it all. The next time your supervisor tells you they tried calling you and, because you didn't answer, you will now be put in for 8 hours of missed opportunity, your immediate response should be: "I'd like to see my Steward." My next advice would be to follow through with that time with your Steward and inform him/her of the situation. This way your Steward can mark that particular day on their calendar ensuring no "missed opportunity" is input by management when they are reviewing equitability at the end of the quarter. This is management's feeble attempt to add ghost hours that you did not work in order to boost your overtime numbers to avoid a potential payout at the end of the quarter.

Here's an idea...how about management actually manage their down routes and inform OTDL the need of their services the day before. Problem solved.

The other issue I'd like to discuss: If your week vacation falls on your deep 6, you are under no obligation to work your nonscheduled weekend before or the Monday after that week. Management is not even able to

ask you to work those days without written request from you stating that you are available to work those days, if needed.

**M-00492 Step 4 March 12, 1984,
H1N-5H-C 18583**

Normally, employees on the overtime desired list who have annual leave immediately preceding and/or following nonscheduled days will not be required to work overtime on their off days. However, if they do desire, employees on the overtime desired list may advise their supervisor in writing of their availability to work a nonscheduled day that is in conjunction with approved leave.

If at any time you feel as if your overtime hours are being manipulated in any way, exercise your right to see your Steward so the issue can be looked into in a timely manner.

Article courtesy of the Fresno, California NALC Branch 231
publication of the April 2013 *Postman's View*



Look Who's Retiring! **MARY BREEDING**

Come celebrate with us!

*Saturday, April 27th, 2013
Time 6:00 p.m.*

Dinner Served @ 7:00 p.m.

*Noriega Restaurant
525 Sumner Street
Bakersfield, CA*

Hosted by Emma Castruita

RVSP by April 26th @ (661) 333-7547

\$20 per person



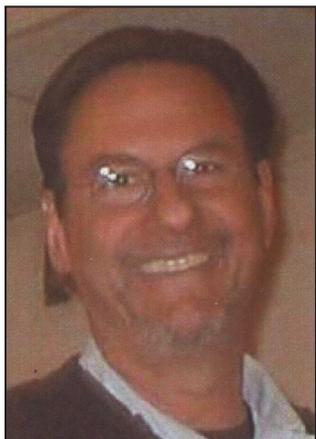
A few scenes from the retirement party....



36
Years!

OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Mike Hotovy
Editor/Unity
NALC Branch 3825



Part of the enjoyment of performing the duties of editor of Unity is perusing newsletters from branches all over the country. One of the best reads I've come across is an article entitled "The First NALC Grievance" written by John Hendry from Branch 825 in Elmhurst, Illinois. The article is fascinating, but a bit lengthy, so I'll do my best to paraphrase:

The story involves Aaron Post, a letter carrier from Salt Lake City. In 1890, Aaron's 13-hour workday started at 7 am and ended at 8 pm. On Sundays, he got a break – working only 8 hours. For his efforts, he was paid 29 cents per hour, or a whopping \$850 a year.

In those days, buildings weren't numbered, streets had no signs, alleys ran haphazardly through the city and most mail was sent without a specific address, most often being addressed "in care of post office so and so," or something as equally vague. Therefore, carriers of Aaron's day didn't just have to know their route, but rather the entire city.

Mail was sorted as carriers referenced their personal "directories", looking up mail alphabetically as in a phone book, streeting mail one piece at a time. So much mail was unaddressed as in "John Smith, New York City", that carriers modified the "NYC" into our contemporary word for undeliverable mail, "nixie".

Substitute carriers got paid \$1 per year. No, that's not a misprint. In fact most substitutes had to camp around regular carriers and beg them to "pony up" for the days they had covered the routes. In 1890, a letter carrier was 30 years away from a pension and 50 years away from a medical plan. Most carriers died in their fifties.

However, in 1888, an Act of Congress had established an eight hour workday for letter carriers. Looking over his hours worked over the previous two years, Aaron Post calculated that he had worked 1725 hours of "mandatory overtime" – time for which the Post Office owed him. So Aaron Post sued the Postal Service.

Other carriers joined Aaron, and a new, two-year-old national union – the National Association of Letter Carriers – carried the suit to the Supreme Court. In 1893, Aaron Post won his money, all \$502 of it, and as a result, carriers won \$3.5 million in "overtime claims" nationwide. All this, because one man decided to stand up and be counted.

Which brings me back to the current day. If this issue of Unity has one theme, is that we, as individual carriers, no

longer have the luxury of being passive in our efforts to defend our jobs and secure a viable future for the Postal Service. We can no longer take for granted that postal management, the legislative and executive branches of government, the national media or the private sector have our long-term survival at heart.

Undeniably, no one knows more, cares more, or is more deeply invested than we are in decisions and legislation that affect the long term security of our jobs as letter carriers. And for the Postal Service and letter carriers to have a chance to ensure a long term viable future, we MUST get out of our comfort zones and become actively involved. If we want a future, we must fight for it.

How do we become involved? Start with small steps. Sign up to become an e-Activist for the NALC. You'll receive notifications when important legislation is moving on Capital Hill. Making a phone call to your representatives may not seem like it makes a big impact, but the cumulative effect of tens of thousands of phone calls is enormous. Individually, this makes your voice stronger.

"..we, as individual carriers, no longer have the luxury of being passive in our efforts to defend our jobs and secure a viable future for the Postal Service."

Next, help make your union stronger. If you can afford it, sign up and donate to COLCPE, the NALC's legislative action committee. I know for many, this involves getting out of our comfort zone as it regards our political affiliations. But in reality, the time for partisanship is, most assuredly, long past. As the story of Aaron Post shows us, involvement in the political process has always been a necessary part of defending our rights as workers and, in today's environment, an essential part of shaping a viable future for the letter carriers and the Postal Service as a public institution.

Finally, support efforts to defend letter carrier jobs with your time. I understand we all have lives – spouses and significant others, children, hobbies and activities. But we are at a critical moment in time. And if we do not act, enormous gains like those won by our predecessors may be eroded and perhaps lost permanently.

NALC President Rolando has already called for a Day of Action on March 24, 2013 in response to PMG Donohoe's aggressive call to end 6-day Delivery on August 1, 2013 without congressional approval. Keep alert for details.

In 1890, Aaron Post and his contemporaries took a stand. In 1971, it was the time of our late President Emeritus Vince Sombrotto and letter carriers across the country. This is our time. And no matter the outcome, let us all take comfort in that, in our time, we answered the call.

This article is reprinted courtesy of #1 Volume 32, of the Spring 2013 *UNITY* published by Rockville, Maryland NALC Branch 3825. Thank you, Editor Mike Hotovy!!

Mike is right on! ***THIS IS*** our time...

Where is My Union?

"I'm not on the overtime list how can they force me, it's my day off." "Why do I pay union dues they don't do anything for me anyway." "I'm getting out of the union that's it."

Heard any of these phrases lately? Yes you probably have and the frustration on our workroom floors is escalating. Mike and I are well aware and have heard the same phrases.

With all the changes and issues happening on the workroom floors we cannot lose sight of the fact that we all need to work together and support one another each and every day. Every carrier is concerned about what the future may hold at the USPS.

Currently in this environment everyone wants time away from the everyday job pressures and having management wanting us to do more and more in less and less time whether it's humanly possible or not. The majority of carriers are concerned about their benefits. The TE's are concerned about their future employment. Our senior carriers are concerned about their retirement and possible loss of future benefits.

We as a Union have to remind ourselves that because of the tough conditions the USPS is working through (whether political or financial) we must stay focused and be looking out for one another. The grievance procedure in our contract is what we have although at times it may not be perfect it is the process in place to handle the issues. The violations keep mounting and so does the pressure and tension on the workroom floor.

Every carrier in uniform knows what the real issue that is affecting our workroom environment is staffing. The violations of the National Agreement by management on overtime issues are a daily occurrence and the amount of grievances filed by the Branch is staggering. This Branch will continue the process till we receive a resolved remedy and the violations cease.

If you see management treating a fellow carrier in a way that is not respectful you need to step up even if it's merely by finding your steward and informing them of the situation. It's much easier to not get involved, but that is not what we as a Union can allow. The Joint Statement of Violence and Behavior in the Workplace was written and agreed upon for these reasons. Everyone is to be treated with dignity and respect. Behavior that includes intimidation and threats will not be tolerated.

When you witness such actions taking place at your office your role does not have to be the person trying to resolve the situation, it may merely be acting as a witness and informing your steward of what has transpired. The grievance procedure deals with facts and that is what is needed in the process. Merely stating harassment will not do. What was said, who

said it, when they said it, and statements by the grievant and any and all witnesses. That is what the grievance package must contain in order to be successful and obtain a proper remedy.

In the offices that Mike and I have visited it seems that in the stations where carriers have taken it upon themselves to watch out for one another and document the issues regarding inappropriate behavior by management these issues get addressed and sometimes resolved.

This by no means insinuates that there are not issues at each and every station Branch 9 represents; it only means the levels are varied. We will not work through these issues by hoping they will get better in time or thinking that the problems will just go away. We cannot just be letter carriers that work at our cases thinking that we are thankful that some supervisor or manager is yelling at someone else and have an "at least it's not me" type of attitude.

We have to support each other and give our support to the stewards by keeping them informed of any actions that we feel may be in violation of the Joint Statement. The Branch also needs to be notified because although the USPS is going through some tough times, improper behavior by supervisors and managers will not be tolerated by not only the officers of this Branch, but rather each and every member of this Union. That is what a Union is all about "an injury to one is an injury to all."

A copy of the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace is posted in every office and I urge you to read and understand every word and when you witness a behavior that is in violation of the Joint Statement, do your part as a member and get involved.

To be a good Union member today it takes more than simply paying dues. We must maintain the standards and ideals that past members have had, whether it was the strikers from the 1970 strike or the current members that are volunteering their time to the Union or by donating to our political funds. We all must recommit ourselves to the standards and ideals that benefit us and not rely solely on the officers we have elected to accomplish these feats on our behalf.

All of the Branch 9 officers will do their best to keep every member informed of current issues that affect us as a Union. You as a member can contribute by attending our General Membership Meetings on the 4th Tuesday of each month to keep informed of current situations. Volunteer at Branch functions and events and also by becoming a contributor to COLCPE and PAL 9.

While we have issues on our workroom floors that are serious the political arena is where we as letter carriers could lose so much more.

DARRELL MAUS
Executive Vice President

Article courtesy of the Minneapolis, MN
Branch 9 News published in January-February 2013



Saturday... Wednesday... ...Part-time

Chuck Clark, Vice-President
NALC Branch 3825

The recent announcement by the USPS to eliminate Saturday mail delivery starting in August could be considered as a reason to put the Postmaster General on suicide watch. Many of us consider this the action of an irrational man bent on destroying, not saving, the USPS. Is a service company eliminating 16.7% of their delivery days a way of saving money or driving business elsewhere?

OUT THERE



The Service has announced that starting in August there will be no regular mail delivery on Saturday. “Package” delivery will continue on Saturday, although there is no definition of what constitutes a “package”. Will “packages” include all types of Priority Mail? Letter carriers, working an estimated five routes each, would still be needed on Saturday in order to deliver all the packages for all routes in a delivery unit.

There are 143,436 city routes and 73,578 rural routes (2012 USPS Annual Report to Congress). Assuming the need for one carrier per five routes to deliver packages on Saturday; there would be a need for 28,687 city carriers and 14,715 rural carriers to perform this work each Saturday. The Service

claims that this change will save about \$2 billion annually.

In March 2011, the Postal Regulatory Commission stated that the Services previous Saturday elimination estimate of a \$3.1 billion savings was overstated by \$1.4 billion. A similar overstatement is likely with their new estimated savings.

A recent poll contracted out by the Service with Ipsos, concerning the elimination of Saturday mail delivery and conducted between February 8 and February 11, 2013, asked questions of 1002 respondents that included; “this change will allow the Postal Service to be financially stable”, “this change will ensure that the Postal Service does not experience an interruption in service”, “this change will ensure that the Postal Service does NOT have to raise the prices of mail services or package delivery in the near future” and “this change will ensure that the Postal Service does NOT have to become a burden on U.S. taxpayers”.

Those are a lot promises to make for eliminating 80% of the Saturday carrier work-force.

Only 22% of the survey respondents replied, “Not at all”, when asked; “To what extent do you believe that the Postal Service’s decision to change mail service delivery to five days per week and package delivery to six days per week will impact you personally?”

On March 24, 2011, the Postal Regulatory Commission issued an “Advisory Opinion on Elimination of Saturday Delivery”. In this report they found that the elimination of Saturday delivery would cause a 25% delay in first-class and Priority mail and revenue losses of approximately \$0.6 billion. “Monday is already the heaviest delivered-volume day. The addition of Saturday volume could cause significant peak load effects impacting both costs and operations.” The report added, “if the Postal Service is not able to increase its productivity beyond the current weekly average, moving Saturday volume to Monday could increase rather than decrease costs.”

The PRC stated, “Rural citizens who do not have access to post offices and rely on letter carriers for services available to urban citizens at post offices would be disproportionately affected (by the elimination of Saturday delivery).”

There have been concerns raised by customers who will have to wait for time-sensitive mail, senders who will have to change when they send mail and the competitive advantage that the USPS will lose through the elimination of Saturday delivery. Some

newspapers have stated that they may establish private delivery to replace the loss of Saturday delivery and seek to widen the exception to the mailbox monopoly that in limited circumstances allows newspapers to deliver to mailboxes. Other mailers have stated that eliminating Saturday delivery will “diminish the value of the mail and make it more difficult for mailers to use mail in their business.” This isn’t the kind of thing you want to do when service is your only business.

The PRC reports in their advisory opinion that the “Postal Services states that if it had not been for the obligation to prefund retiree health benefits, it would have broken even over the last three fiscal years.” This makes it clear where the real problem

lies with regards to the financial condition of the Service. No one is saying not to fund retiree health costs, only that it be done in a responsible way.

Senate Bill, S 1789 contained provisions addressing the option to eliminate Saturday delivery after a 24 month period following enactment. (The bill passed the Senate but has not been voted on in the House of Representatives.) These provisions included, "where appropriate, providing or expanding access to mailboxes for periodical mailers on days which the Postal Service does not provide delivery" and, "at no time shall there be more than 2 consecutive days without mail delivery to street addresses, including recognized holidays." Again, these provisions are not law, but the requirement to allow private companies access to mailboxes to deliver periodicals would result in tremendous revenue loss for the USPS.

As you can see, the subject of eliminating Saturday delivery is a complex subject. In April 2010, the postal company of the Netherlands, TNT, announced plans to go to a 3 day delivery week. "In the Netherlands, we will make 11,000 people redundant in the next couple of years. They will be replaced with part-timers and franchisees. Mail collection and delivery will be outsourced." The Universal Service Obligation is "a kind of Jurassic Park and we should get rid of it."

Could this be a precursor of where the USPS is heading? The elimination of Saturday delivery could easily lead to the elimination of Wednesday delivery or any other day(s) of the week in order to save even more money. Full-time carrier positions are eliminated and the work-force becomes 100% part-time. I don't believe this is a far-fetched possibility.

I know there are some carriers who welcome the prospect of working Monday through Friday. But we have to look at the big picture and recognize the negative impact such a move will have



on the Service, our livelihoods, our least senior brothers and sisters and the American public.

This article is courtesy of the Rockville, Maryland NALC Branch 3825 newsletter UNITY.

Cartoons are courtesy of NALC Branch 782 S.A.N.E. Fred Acedo and were previously published in past issues of the NALC Branch 782 newsletter over the course of the last twenty years.

OUT THERE



WHAT TO DO WHEN AN ACTIVE CARRIER DIES

- ◆ Notify employee's immediate supervisor, postmaster and personnel section (if any). Give supervisor locker keys and badge as well as information on time and place of memorial services. Check with USPS personnel or postmaster for benefits for spouse and any dependent children.
- ◆ Fill out forms (obtain from USPS personnel section or postmaster): application for death benefits under the retirement system; claim for unpaid compensation; claim for FEGLI death benefits.
- ◆ Notify the Thrift Savings Plan Service Center, National Finance Center, P.O. Box 61500, New Orleans, LA 70161-1500 or call 504-255-6000 if the carrier had a TSP account.
- ◆ Notify the carrier's branch.
- ◆ If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office and the commanding officer of local military installation.
- ◆ Notify banks and other financial institutions.
- ◆ Call the local office of the Social Security Administration or toll-free 800-772-1213.
- ◆ Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the carrier had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, write to 100 Indiana Ave., NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318. If the carrier belonged to the NALC Health Benefit Plan, write 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149 or call 703-729-4677. Note: Health benefit coverage for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if carrier had family coverage at time of death and if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.
- ◆ Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A RETIRED CARRIER DIES

- ◆ Notify U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Retirement Operations Center, Boyers, PA 16017, or call toll-free 888-767-6738 and provide: full name of deceased; date of birth; date of death; Social Security number; CSA claim number; and survivor's name, address and relationship to the deceased.
- ◆ For quicker action, provide the above information to NALC's Director of Retired Members, 100 Indiana Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144, 202-393-4695, or call toll-free 800-424-5186 only on Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday, from 10 a.m.-noon and 2-4 p.m. (Eastern). NALC will alert OPM so that survivor benefits will commence as quickly as possible, and will send you the application for death benefits under the retirement system, and the claim for death benefits under FEGLI.
- ◆ Return any un-cashed annuity checks to the address on the accompanying Treasury Department envelope. If payments are being deposited directly to a bank or other financial institution, contact them with the retiree's date of death and advise them to return any future payments to the Treasury Department.
- ◆ If the retiree had a TSP account, notify the Thrift Savings Plan Service Center, National Finance Center, Box 61500, New Orleans, LA 70161-1500, or call 504-255-6000.
- ◆ Notify the carrier's branch.
- ◆ If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office and the commanding officer of local military installation.
- ◆ Notify banks and other financial institutions.
- ◆ Call the local office of the Social Security Administration or toll-free 800-772-1213.
- ◆ Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the carrier had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, write to 100 Indiana Ave., NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318. If the carrier belonged to the NALC Health Benefit Plan, write 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149 or call 702-729-4677. Note: Health benefit coverage for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if retiree had family coverage at time of death and if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.
- ◆ To request a duplicate 1099R, Statement of Annuity Paid, call 888-767-6738. Callers will need the former carrier's CSA number and the last four digits of Social Security number.
- ◆ Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs.

If the spouse of a retired letter carrier dies, call the NALC retirement office for instructions on how to: restore annuity to full amount; switch health coverage from family to self (unless dependent children); change beneficiaries.

What are they thinking?

Stop blaming letter carriers

By Bill Thornton, Vice-President

The decline in mail volume has had the greatest impact on the loss of carrier routes. (This has been emphasized by the National President.) It is on the margins that some routes are lost because of carrier behavior. Carriers should be consistent in the time it takes to do their routes. "Unsatisfactory job performance" must be documented by management and while it is unusual for carriers to be fired for this charge, it is not impossible. Management has won cases involving wild swings in the time a carrier takes to do a route.



Carriers who actually skip lunches are obviously hurting themselves and by extension the union's effort to save routes.

In this new environment of low volume, carriers should be aware of "numbers". We used to advise carriers to ignore reference volume and ignore DOIS. We can no longer do this. Since the joint route inspections, the trend has been to recommend carriers to be aware of "numbers". It's good to know how the route was adjusted and how much mail you may have on a particular day in reference to that adjustment. But the important thing is consistency as far as hours used with certain volumes.

Some Carriers are going along with factory like speed-up.

The long standing model of one carrier serving customers on a route has been a mixed bag. It has served to provide good service to customers, loyalty to a route and customers, etc. But at the same time, as management supposedly became more sophisticated, some carriers have felt the need to go along with whatever version of the speed-up that comes along with the new factory like system.

We should stop blaming letter carriers for the loss of routes. Management allowed the volume to disappear. The Internet and the reduced amount of first class and the recession's impact on standard mail notwithstanding, the nitwits let UPS and Fed Ex steal the parcel and overnight

business. It is admittedly difficult to run a business under the Postal Rate Commission but they are incompetent nonetheless.

Article 3 of the National Agreement between the NALC and the Postal Service allows management to run the business that the postal service is engaged in. The union essentially is limited to the challenging of management activities in areas relating to wages and working conditions. This is important to understand because many times carriers bring up issues that while disturbing are not grievable.

Most routes are lost due to less volume

The cry *what's the union going to do about it* can be analyzed from the previous perspective. Sometimes, we must honestly acknowledge, reluctantly, that the union can do little or nothing about a particular issue. But at the same time, it shouldn't be forgotten that there are many carrier protections and rights, some of which are listed below

- **The right to be paid for all the time you work.** Don't laugh—it is commonplace for employers to attempt to not pay you. Coverage by FLSA Fair Labor Standards Act, and the National Agreement guarantees you payment for all time worked. Management must follow specific procedures for disallowance of any time. In our case, the clock rings indicate the time worked.
- Finally, Article 14 and OSHA **guarantees your right to work in a safe workplace.** Use postal form 1767 and, if necessary, OSHA COMPLAINTS TOLL FREE NUMBER 800-475-4020.

Insist on exercising our rights. They are a powerful antidote to management's right to mismanage.

Focus on the issues that the union has control over, including being paid for all your work, holding management responsible for responding to carrier notification of inability to finish assignment. The current environment is basically a speed-up.

Grudgingly, management is not that bad in cost savings. And, after all, it is a business. But carriers should not give them more savings than they deserve while acknowledging that the loss of routes is to the greatest extent based on the drop in mail volume.

So let's not be too hard on ourselves and look for someone else to blame.

Sometimes we overcomplicate things. Knowledge is power, but sometimes it is good to just keep it simple.

Carriers are required to provide an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

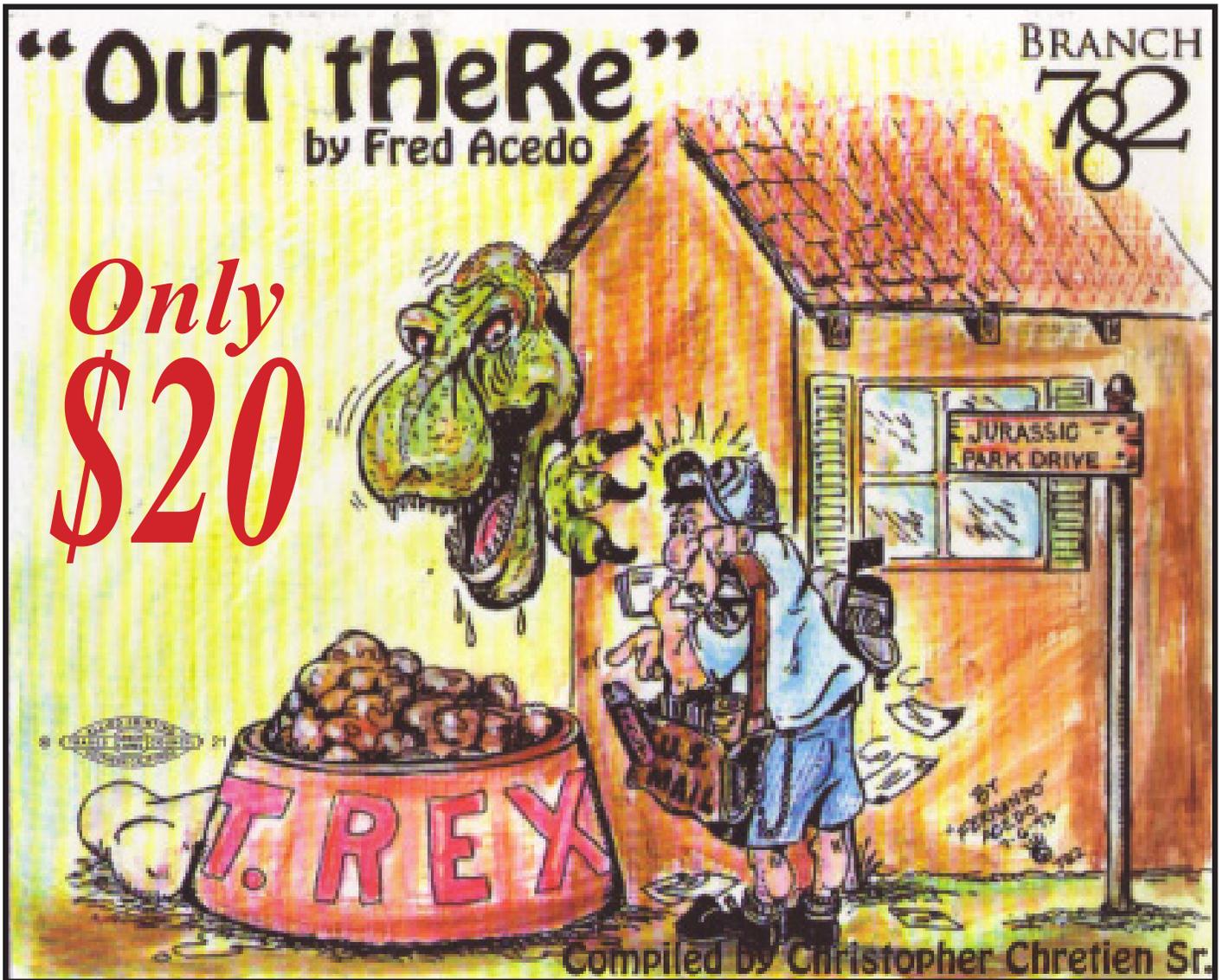
This article originally appeared in the March/April 2012 publication of the NALC Branch 214 *Voice* published in San Francisco, California. I've kept it because it addresses some issues that I've found to be true...

“Out tHeRe”

by Fred Acedo

BRANCH
782

Only
\$20



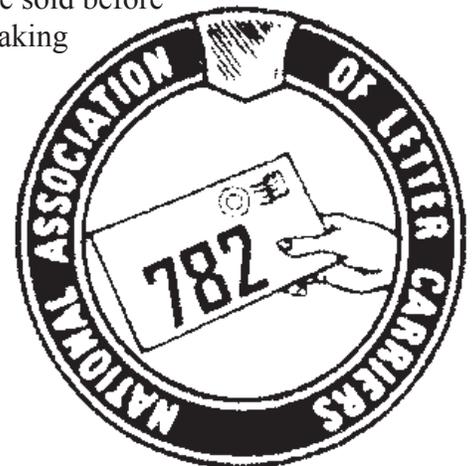
So what is this advertising message about? **THIS** is an MDA fundraiser. We are asking for **YOUR** help!!!!!!

We envisioned that all 2,500 copies of this book would be sold at the national NALC Convention in Anaheim in 2010. Didn't happen. We still have 247 copies of this book waiting to be sold before we can cover our costs and try to make our anticipated MDA donation. Making that donation is what we would really like to do!

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

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

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





Branch Officers

President	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Vice-President	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Recording Secretary	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
Treasurer	Molly Biggar	(661) 832-0393
Financial Secretary	Anita Holderman	(661) 487-5353
HBP & MBA	Mark Ramirez	(661) 834-5011
Sargeant-at-Arms	Darryl Holderman	(661) 332-9201
Chief Trustee	Lucinda Martinez	(661) 327-2898
Trustee	Danny Blair	(661) 397-8107
Trustee	Mabel Bullis	(661) 496-5679

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Basil Zuniga, Editor-guy
(661) 397-4330
brzii@aol.com

Juan R. Rodriguez, Assistant Editor
(H) (661) 854-0635
(C) (661) 912-7553

The "S.A.N.E."*

Fred Acedo, Cartoonist

*(Special Assistant Newsletter Editor)

P.O. Box 6532
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532

Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer
(661) 589-1683
(559) 801-8645

NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

Avenal (93203)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Arvin (93209)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
Delano (93215)	Gracie Silva	(661) 325-5526
Lamont (93241)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
McFarland (93250)	Robert Campos	(661) 805-1034
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Taft (93268)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Wasco (93280)	Jerry Patterson	(661) 699-2462
Downtown Station (93301)	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
South Station (93304)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 487-5353
South Station Alternate	Judy Kiyoshi	(661) 817-5529
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar	(661) 327-7637
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Pam Smith	(661) 979-5854
Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Dole Court (93308)	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Dole Court (93308)	Shari Sharpe	(661) 364-5544
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Mojave (93501)	Vacant	
California City (93504)	Russell Day	(760) 373-8963
Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93526)	Vacant	
Tehachapi (93561)	Mary Morphis	(661) 822-6614
Trona (93562)	Lynnell Howell	(760) 371-1039
Ridgecrest (93555)	Lynnell Howell	(760) 371-1039

**Branch 782
Website
www.782nalc.com**

Rick Plummer, Webmaster



National Association of Letter Carriers
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Bakersfield, California
Permit Number 32

General Meeting Tuesday April 23, 2013 7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

OUT THERE



\$500?

YOU have a chance to win! What do YOU have to do???

Attend the NALC Branch 782 meeting on April 23, 2013.

Will *your* name be called next?

If you are not present... rest assured somebody **WILL** let you know that you didn't win the \$500...

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