

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update

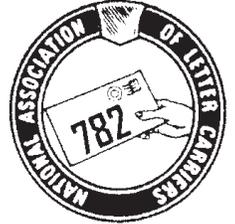


ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO



CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891

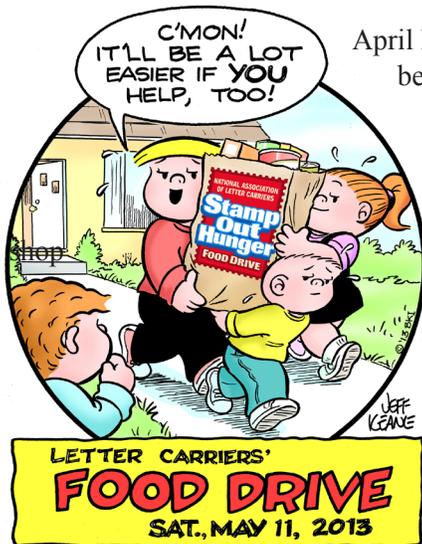
WEB VERSION

MAY 2013

at the
Mike:



100,000 Pounds??



April has finally come to an end with all the Local Memorandums of Understanding being negotiated. Only three of the agreements still need to have the final copies compiled and signed. It definitely has been a busy several months.

I want to thank **ALL** Carriers who assisted with the Food Drive this year. And, I particular want to thank Dole Court Shop Steward Shari Sharpe and Shafter Steward Norma Hamer who have taken on the responsibility of the Food Drive for our Branch. I wanted to also thank Shop Steward Lynnel Howell for all her help in Ridgecrest. All three have spent a lot of their own time to insure that the Food Drive was a success. **THEY ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!!!**

It appears that by the initial numbers, our Branch may have collected over 100,000 pounds! The credit for the success should go to all the Carriers who took the extra effort to insure that the cards and bags were delivered to as many addresses as possible and to all the Carriers and their friends and families who helped unload and sort the food into the bins on the Food Drive day. I want to also thank those supervisors and managers who were there on the postal docks sorting the donated food. Unfortunately, there were some offices in the branch where a few Carriers refused to deliver the bags and where the supervisors did nothing to assist in any way the Food Drive coordinators in their offices. Luckily, those few are the exception.

We will be discussing not only the Food Drive but also the changes to the Local Agreements and the update concerning PTF's being converted to full-time. I hope to see everyone there at the meeting at 7:00 p.m. on May 28 .

MIKE TOWERY

Johnny on the Spot



The month of April seemed to fly by. Thank “the Man upstairs” it is over!!

In roughly thirty days we were able to negotiate LMOU’s (Local Memorandums of Agreement) for all of the sixteen offices our Branch represents.

It would not have happened if it weren’t for Branch 782 President Towery. He worked countless hours and put endless thought into how we would negotiate for each individual city.

I want to thank him for allowing me to be part of the process and for all of his time. We spent some very long days and a few late nights to complete the negotiations.

I would also like to thank Kim Gerdes and Mike Meza for their time spent and thank Mike’s wife, Diane, and my wife, Annette, for being understanding during the process.

Along with Pam Smith and Diana Herrera, I participated in the NALC West States Lobby Session from April 21st thru the 25th. We attended a Rap session with President Rolando from 8 a.m. to 10:30 in the morning and then had Lobbying training from 2pm till 6 in the afternoon. The lobby meetings were scheduled on Tuesday and Wednesday.

I had a total of seven meetings spread throughout the two days. Six of them went very well. We have a lot of support on the Hill for retaining six-day delivery. The issue is getting our legislation passed in a Congress that doesn’t get anything done. Thursday morning we attended a Congressional breakfast on Capitol Hill. Then it was back to the hotel to get our bags and come back home.

I was also involved with the minor route adjustments for South Station during April and am currently finishing up the adjustment for the Downtown Station. I am scheduled to begin Hillcrest on Monday May 20th and it looks like Stockdale will be next.



Annette Ortega at the NALC Food Drive kickoff



The Food Drive has come and gone another year. My guesstimate is that the final totals for Branch 782 will be over 100 thousand pounds!

The numbers indicate that the “bags” really do work. My thanks to Norma Hamer and Shari Sharpe and all of the station coordinators for their time and effort to make this a huge success.



Thank you to every one of my fellow Brother and Sister Letter Carriers who delivered the cards, bags and collected the food.

I hope to see some new faces at this month’s meeting.

JOHN ORTEGA
Branch 782 Vice-President

“We the People”

Let me start with “We the People” means US!!!! You, me, all the American people have a lot to lose if we let Congress-



man D. Issa (R) destroy the Postal Service. If we sit back and do nothing, it could happen...

In April, twenty States sent their NALC legislative activists to “walk the Hill” in DC. We met with numerous Congressional and Senate representatives on supporting “The Postal Service Protection Act H.R. 630” and S. 316.

Our goal is to get them to co-sponsor these bills. The key provisions in these measures is necessary to return the Postal Service to financial health in both the short *and* the long term, while preserving vital networks, high quality service standards, and solid middle-class jobs.

Eliminating the future retiree health benefit pre-funding requirement is crucial. It is an unfair burden which costs the USPS between \$5.4 billion and \$5.8 billion *every* year.

Returning CSRS and FERS overpayments to the Postal Service (according to studies by the Office of the Inspector General and the Postal Regulatory Commission) is an important step to USPS financial stability. The Postal Service has **OVERPAID** between \$50 billion and \$75 billion into its CSRS pension fund.

S. 316 and H.R. 630 call for allowing the Postal Service to recover the overpayments by transferring CSRS assets.



- ✓ Protecting six-day mail delivery by establishing permanent legislation that requires USPS to deliver mail six days a week.
- ✓ Establishing new revenue for the Postal Service non-postal services.
- ✓ Preventing the closure of rural post offices
- ✓ Protecting mail-processing facilities

The NALC urges members of Congress to stand up for preserving this vital government service by co-sponsoring S. 316 and H.R. 630 today.

We must do our part to save the Postal Service by contacting our Congressman and Senators to co-sponsor this measure.

Remember...They work for you. YOU are their constituent. They represent us, so safeguard your job! Have your family and friends contact them, too!

Remember: Go to the NALC.org website and sign the petition “We the People”!!! If you have not done it yet, read more facts that can be found on our NALC website and sign the petition.

In Solidarity

DIANA HERRERA
Legislative Liaison



Minutes of the April 2013 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by Sgt. at Arms, Darryl Holderman at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd day of April, 2013 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Steward, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present, except President, Mike Towery who was working on Local Negotiations and Vice President, John Ortega who was in Washington D.C. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; S.A.N.E., Fred Acedo; Webmaster, Rick Plummer; Photographer, Anita Holderman; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes; Asst. Secretary, Mabel Bullis and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes of the March 26, 2013 meeting were read by Asst. Recording Secretary, Mabel Bullis and accepted with the correction that Kim Gerdes read the Financial Secretary report at the March meeting.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Daniel Hurtado, Toni Valdez, Eric Christiansen and Jami Wiggs.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Norma Hamer and Shari Sharpe shared one of the banners for the Food Drive. Basil Zuniga reported that there were a lot of people from Hillcrest at the folding and they got the job done quickly. Molly Biggar gave him photos from Stephanie MacLaughlin's retirement dinner. He also reported that the Web version has a lot more photos. Next month will be East/Brundage station's turn. Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee reported that the only event at this time is the Softball Tournament on Memorial Day weekend. Contact Ralph Ramirez. Basil Zuniga suggested a MDA Bowling Tournament. Mabel Bullis reported that no books were sold this month.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mark Ramirez asked the members present to sign the poem for Mike Towery. Retiree Dicie Wilder informed members that her grandson, Cody Wilder, who received the Saxenmier Scholarship, is graduating this year. Mark Ramirez presented Norma and Shari with a copy of the poem from the newsletter to thank them for all the work they have done for the Food Drive. Mark also thanked Fred Acedo for all the artwork he did and presented him with a gift. Basil Zuniga talked about the Rally-how easy it would have been to do nothing-then he thought about all those carriers in the 70's. They didn't know if they would have a job when they came back. Everything that we have was won by those willing to give.

Retiree Lois Miller reported that former carrier Bernadette Garrett passed away. The service will be Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$11,608.54 was collected for the month.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Bigger reported:

Beginning Income	\$72,933.95
Dues and Income	\$10,807.84
Interest Income	\$ 5.83
Total Balance	\$83,746.79
Total Expenses	\$ 9,824.92
Ending Balance	\$73,921.87

The 50/50 Drawing was won by Deven Patterson.

Mark Ramirez donated chocolates to be raffled. They were won by Stephanie MacLaughlin, Dennis Winterborne, Bill Marchand, Dicie Wilder, Deven Patterson and Basil Zuniga

The Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Oscar Salazar if he had been present.

There were 34 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

OUT THERE



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!!!

TEHACHAPI (93561)
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!**



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, Chatanooga, 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 NALCSELECT generic (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$4 for NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs); NALCSENIOR generic antibiotics are available **FREE** for a 30 day supply, when Medicare is primary (certain antibiotics only).

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

Our PPO doctors and facilities—through 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.diabetis.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

From the Branch 782 Poet at large...



I have been on a poetic binge lately. I hope our members are not getting tired of seeing poems in our newsletter with my by line attached. But, I personally feel, if a poem is written, framed and presented to one or more of our outstanding members—it will be lasting. It's my way of saying "THANK YOU" for being "YOU" and that we members appreciate the time you have spent away from your family to support Branch 782 and it's members.

As the national NALC Food Drive approaches on Saturday, May 11th, I wrote a poem thanking Norma D.D. Hamer and Shari D.D. Sharp (Dedicated Duo!) for caring enough to tackle the job of getting the thousands of Food Drive cards and bags to ALL of our offices. The poem also THANKS our Letter Carriers, and patrons for making this food collection a real success for our community. The NALC and our loyal membership participate willingly in our Food Drive as well as our efforts for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. They both enhance public relations for Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service.

My last poem? I wrote it to spotlight Branch 782's S.A.N.E. artist Fred Acedo. He might be "off the chain", but it's not long because his wife keep him on a short one!! I felt, my poem really, hit all the points that make Fred...Fred.



And the one item I presented to Fred along with this framed, matted poem, was a bottle of red wine that I purchased at Costco. I bribed Fred to draw some art work for President Mike Towery's poem, and Norma and Shari's Food Drive poem. I picked out a bottle of "RED" wine. I know almost nothing about wine. I read "Stark Red" and placed it in my cart. As I walked down the aisle, I thought, "Maybe, I'll take this one back, and replace it with the last wine I purchased for Fred.... Menage a something?"

As I rolled the bottle over in the cart, I saw the complete wine label... **WOW!!** It was **STARK RAVING RED!!** How could this wine company know this was such a **FITTING** wine name for the Fred poem.

And then? As this wine perched on the counter at home, I thought... "Hmmm, if I was to cut out the letter 'F' and place it in front of RED...it becomes: **STARK RAVING FRED!**" And? I do it!

I have given Fred a supply of red wine, for the art work I have requested. A few more bottles, and I just might take up a collection for a gift card for Fred for the Betty Ford clinic... for Fred.

I had written a poem about our Branch president Mike Towery, right after the Sombrotto poem. As Mr. Mike Towery aka "The Professor" contributes countless hours and pages and pages of the best information for our Stewards and members on contract and Postal issues. I know Mike doesn't want

the praise he so justly deserves. In my poem, I attempted to let him know that those of us who are involved, attend the meetings, and work beside him **KNOW** how **DEDICATED** he is to our Branch and to the NALC.

Mike has been a true friend to me, and he knows I will be there to help him, whenever he calls on me...except on Weekends, my Birthday, Christmas, New Years, Halloween, Thanksgiving, the first day of spring, etc. LOL...humor is oozing from some place. I'd better find it, and cap it off. It's getting thick in here!

Pictures on this page courtesy of NALC Branch 782 Photographer Anita Holderman.

MARK RAMIREZ

100,000 Pounds??

As I sit and write this article, I am finding myself reflecting back on the events that have lead up to this day. One always wants to improve from the year before. I know that I said it last year, but I'm going to say it again, "THE BAGS WORK!!!" I



want to personally thank ALL of the Letter Carriers and the volunteers for their hard work! It is a rewarding feeling knowing that one is helping out others. I don't have all of the numbers in from the AO's as of this writing. But, from what I have so far, stations have brought in more than last year!

As far as Shafter goes, we collected 3030 pounds! It still amazes me when I look at all of the food that is collected. Communities are so giving

and—it never fails—the less fortunate are the most giving.



Thank you Kris Zaragoza, Dillon Glover, Kayla Polhamus, and Victoria Pol-

hamus for driving around and snagging up all of those bags and weighing the food! Your help was so greatly appreciated. Thank you to Annette Espinoza, Mande Byrd and Carmen Vizzard, our wonderful Clerks who took in food donations over the counter. To our Carriers: Diana Mills, Israel Cedillos, Monica Salazar, Melanie Davis, Fred Doll, Lori New, and (of course) Mae Voights...thank you, for all your efforts, great or small, it is appreciated!



And last, but not least, Shari Sharp! You have done a wonderful job! With the hurdles that had to be overcome, *you have done a FANTASTIC job!* Kuddos to you! Here's to another year!

Until next year,

NORMA HAMER
Shafter Shop Steward

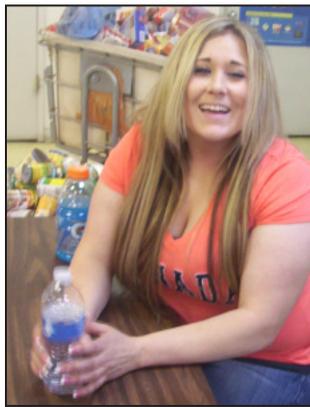
- Avenal—670 Pounds
- Arvin—247 Pounds
- Delano—2058 Pounds
- Lamont—87 Pounds
- McFarland—733 Pounds
- Taft—1800 Pounds
- Wasco—1072 Pounds
- Mojave—1140 Pounds
- Caifornia City—2048 Pounds
- Boron—349 Pounds
- Edwards—536 Pounds
- Tehachapi—4930 Pounds
- Trona—220 Pounds
- Ridgecrest—9425 Pounds
- Shafter—3030 Pounds



I have to give our station big props this year!!! ***A WHOPPING 733 POUNDS OF FOOD WAS BROUGHT INTO OUR STATION AND PICKED UP BY A LOCAL CHURCH!!!***



Our office, in the past, generally collected a very small amount (2-3 tubs) which went back into the community. This year, as you can see in our pics it was an amazingly ***FULL*** pickup load!! ***Yay!!! THIS WAS AWESOME!!!!***



In the last two Food Drives, we averaged two postal tubs—I would estimate what we collected to be under 100 pounds. This year? ***Over six times our average is inspiring...***

Carrie, our new postmaster, has had a huge impact in our office!!! Our Postmaster Carrie made a huge deal about the NALC Food Drive. *There was a lot of team work!* We had a teen volunteer who helped out loading the truck, and our Postmaster also came in and volunteered her time to make this a success.

BONNIE WHITBEY
McFarland Shop Steward



Downtown—2089 Pounds
South Station—7709 Pounds
Hillcrest—11689 Pounds
E.B./Brundage—10552 Pounds
Dole Court—19336 Pounds
Stockdale— 14717 Pounds
Camino Media—4527 Pounds

Carriers collect more cans than ever!

This year's NALC Food Drive was a great success thanks to all the hard work from the Carriers...especially those Carriers who delivered the blue bags.

This year was the first year some Carriers that have all MBU deliveries collected food because they delivered the blue bags to the MBUs. This year's total shows the Carriers how much the postal customers still love their Carriers. Bakersfield carriers collected almost 71,000 lbs of food—and we are still counting! (I think it was the bright orange shirts.)



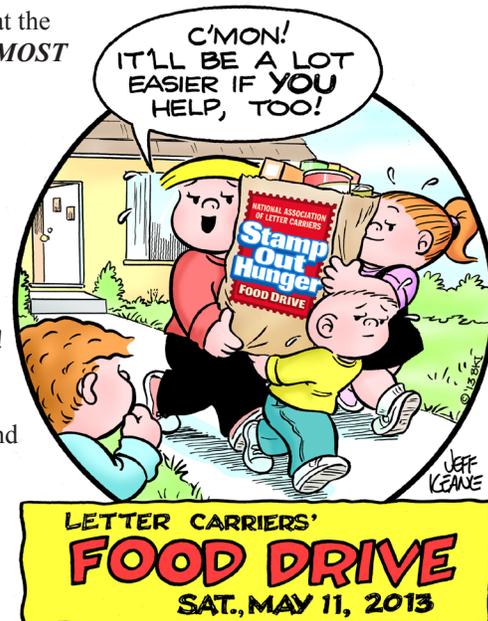
This is the biggest donation of cans on record yet at the Food Bank from NALC Branch 782. **THAT'S ALMOST 7,000 POUNDS MORE THAN LAST YEAR!**

Thanks a lot to all the Food Drive Coordinators: Randy (Stockdale); Judy (South); Alan (Hillcrest); Tammy (Camino); Lana (Downtown); Bonnie (McFarland); Mabel (Brundage/East); Norma (Shafter); Lynell (Ridgecrest); and, Carmen (GMF) for all the hard work and time off-the-clock they put in to make this Food Drive happen!



A big thanks to Sabrina Bonnilla for letting local television station Channel 23 news just show up and follow her on the route. Great Job!

This year we had a lot of high school students from Centennial, Frontier, Highland, Foothill, and North High Schools who came out to volunteer. It was great to see so many teenagers on a Saturday working so hard to make this event so successful! And they weren't even getting paid...



Bakersfield Postmaster Linda LaForce and her husband, Mike (who is a retired Letter Carrier), also stopped by and helped sort food at Dole Court and at Stockdale Station. Thanks for your support!

Just think. Carriers in Branch 782 collected—**IN ONE DAY**—enough food to feed thousands of hungry families in Kern County! That's an awesome way for Carriers to give back to their local communities.

Thanks, again, Carriers!!! **YOU'VE MADE THIS THE BEST YEAR EVER!!!**

SHARI SHARP

100,000 Pounds??



E.B/Brundage Thank You!!!

Our 21st Annual National Letter Carrier's Food Drive at Brundage Station was low key this year.

Unfortunately, we didn't do any exciting Bake Sales, Raffles, Auctions, etc. **BUT** we had a great turn out!

Our anonymous donators still came through and one of our clerks—Vanessa Halle—whose “Northeast Knights Cheer-leading Squad” helped raise money. PTF Carrier Gulshan Kaur who also contributed, adding a total about 9,000 EXTRA pounds of food!

We even had a small celebration for Mother's Day. Chili Beans and Cheese for your Hot Dogs and Nachos with a delicious “store bought” marble Mother's Day cake and the mother's got to take home balloons!

We are all very fortunate to have what we have and to be able to help others in such a way is a great blessing. Yes, it is a harder day's work but the objective has so much greater meaning behind it.



I want to thank Norma Hamer and Shari Sharpe for volunteering their time, energy, and effort in making another year happen.

Thank you to **EVERYONE** who does their part in keeping this event thriving!

It makes me proud to work with all of my co-workers and to know that we are able to do so much when we work together!!!



MABEL BULLIS



100,000 Pounds??





We Did Good!!!



Mel's Meal Maintenance Meditations Thoughts on NALC Food Drive 2013

Preliminary Results Appear to Indicate that the 2013 Food Drive May be a Record Breaker

The jury is still out, but early indications point to this 2013 version of the National Association of Letter Carriers food drive being a record breaker. I was there for either the first or the second one in 1994, which would make about 19 food drives for me, and never have I collected so much food. I am physically exhausted, but I suppose I will sleep the sleep of the righteous knowing that I played my part in this tremendous effort.



It wasn't even close. For me, the 2013 food drive won by a landslide. Both the front and rear compartments of my LLV were bursting with food when a supervisor came by and took my haul back to the station at about 2:15. At this point I was about two thirds through my route, and I still managed to fill up the front compartment again and most of the back compartment before I returned to the station. To get an idea of the amount of food I collected the photo of the rear compartment seen above can be doubled, and about eight or nine bags stacked on top of that to boot. Yes, I have seen pictures from other places in the country that make my haul look like chicken feed by comparison, but the zip code I work in is decidedly lower middle class, and I understand that you snooty rich post offices are always going to kick our lowly butts. Still, this was a remarkable year.



Last year I remember collecting about four or five bags on the walking route I was carrying on my T-6 string that day. I was on another walking route today but I picked up at least 30 bags. I definitely committed a journalistic faux pas by not counting the bags accurately, but I was not expecting to pick up so much and I was thrown for a loop. In the morning when I was making my commitment with the supervisor I had last year's food drive in mind so I overestimated myself and had to run like a rookie to play catch up.

What was the difference? My theory is that this year in the San Diego District we distributed large paper bags to our postal customers, rather than the flimsy plastic bags we passed out last year. Last year I felt like a Von's bagboy trying to get those unmanageable things ready to stuff in mailboxes, and I think that a lot of our customers thought the flimsy, untidy plastic bags were trash and treated them as such. On the other hand, the paper bags had a clearly printed message upon them that was immediately visible. Furthermore, the paper bags held more, and customers were stuffing them tight to prove it. These factors might have made the difference in the quantity of this year's haul.

I suppose that the votes (in the form of tonnage collected) still need to be counted, just like in an election, before we can get too excited and declare victory, but I have a gut feel that this one is going to be huge and surpass our previous food drives. I think the victory will be indisputable, with no hanging chad controversy. Why? Either this food drive was publicized better or the economy is improving.

There are always a handful of disgruntled letter carriers who take advantage of this day to complain about poor people (why can't they buy their own damn food) and drag their feet about the food drive, but even though it involves extra work without necessarily being allowed extra time by stingy supervisors, most letter carriers go about their business this day with enthusiasm and graciousness. I should actually take it easy on the supervisors, because on this particular day most of them are out on the back dock rolling up their sleeves and sorting the food with the carriers. Many employees come in on their days off and work for free on food drive day, and sometimes they bring their families with them. Two teenage children of one of my coworkers were out on the back dock helping carriers unload the food when I got back to the station. It is nice to see that at least one day out of the year people put aside pettiness and work together toward a common goal in a spirit of charity and cooperation. There still may be hope for the human race!

Wishing you a happy food drive day, Mel

Source: <http://melcarriere.hubpages.com/hub/Mels-Meal-Maintenance-Meditations-Thoughts-on-NALC-Food-Drive-2013>

Tragedy in Moore, Oklahoma

Postal employees recovering from Oklahoma tornado: The devastating tornado that struck outside Oklahoma City on May 20, killed at least 24 people, including one member of the APWU. NALC Region 4 Regional Administrative Assistant Dan Versluis reports that, according to Branch 458 in Oklahoma City, the Moore station took an indirect hit. It appears that all carriers' personal vehicles in the Moore Post Office parking lot were destroyed. Several carriers suffered damage to, or total loss of, their homes but there are no reports of injury or loss of life involving carriers. "When a storm like this hits, we must match its ferocity with our own generosity," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Please contribute to the Postal Employees' Relief Fund, to help our brothers, sisters and co-workers rebuild after this tragedy." Click here for PERF's official website. Click here to find out how you can contribute to PERF immediately via text message.



Update: Oklahoma City Branch 458 has created a relief fund for the immediate help of NALC members affected by the Moore tornado. You can send donations to: Branch 458 Relief Fund, Branch 458, 221 S. Eagle Lane, Oklahoma City, OK 73128. Contributions or gifts to the Branch 458 Relief Fund are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes.



A Tornado's Impact

Rear of the Moore, Oklahoma Post Office

(photo by David Miller, President, NALC Branch 458, Oklahoma City, OK)

Many of us witnessed the devastation from the tornado in the Moore, Oklahoma area from the comfort of our living rooms. No doubt many were moved to tears when we heard of the heroism of the teachers who used their bodies as human shields to protect the children entrusted to their care. While we watched the horror on our televisions, for us it

seemed so far away.

The Postal Employees' Relief Fund has representatives from all the unions and associations and we swing into action when there are disasters that impact postal employees and retirees.

The tragedy in the Moore, Oklahoma area has hit home for us as postal employees. We have learned that there was an off-duty postal employee who died in the tornado. We also have early reports that as many as 28 postal families have had their homes totally or partially destroyed.

The news cycle will change but the impact to the postal employees and everyone in the area of Moore, Oklahoma won't change soon. They need our help.

PERF is still receiving applications from the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Sandy -- and the 2013 Hurricane Season begins June 1. So please consider donating to the Postal Employees Relief Fund. We have several ways you can choose to donate:

Check or money order directly to our mailing address: PERF, PO Box 7630, Woodbridge VA 22195. Using your cell phone you can text the word PERF to 50555 to make a one-time \$10.00 donation Through the Combined Federal Campaign, designation #10268 to the Postal Employees Relief Fund.

Postal Employees Relief Fund



The devastating tornado that struck outside Oklahoma City, OK on Monday, killing at least 51 people including 20 children, also affected letter carriers. Region 4 Regional Administrative Assistant Dan Versluis reports that according to Branch 458 in Oklahoma City the Moore OK station took an indirect hit. While it is too early to assess the damage and communication is difficult, it appears that all carriers' personal vehicles in the Moore Post Office parking lot were destroyed. Several carriers suffered damage to, or total loss of, their homes but all letter carriers are accounted for and thus far there are no reports of injury or loss of life involving carriers. The storm system behind Monday's twister threatens a large portion of the country on Tuesday, particularly parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. "When a storm like this hits, we must match its ferocity with our own generosity," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Please contribute to the Postal Employees Relief Fund, to help our brothers, sisters and co-workers rebuild after this tragedy."

Entering Fred's Out There World

OUT THERE



OUT THERE



Acedo's also a writer!

OUT THERE



Dear Basil,

The other day while struggling with ideas for drawing cartoons, I began to ponder the whole creative process from a fragment of an idea to finished work of art.

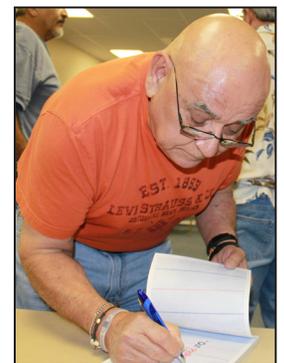
Then, I remembered a day a couple of weeks ago. While driving on the 58 Freeway near Weedpatch, it began to rain. I visualized the large, dark rain cloud as a giant brain opening up and spewing forth thousands of ideas onto the waiting earth below.

Half of the droplets fell onto little patches of wildflowers on the side of the asphalt road—eager to absorb the droplets and flourish into objects of color and beauty and be admired and appreciated.

The other half of the raindrops fell into the sewer farm...

Now I understand.

FRED



“Out tHeRe”

by Fred Acedo

BRANCH
782

Only
\$20



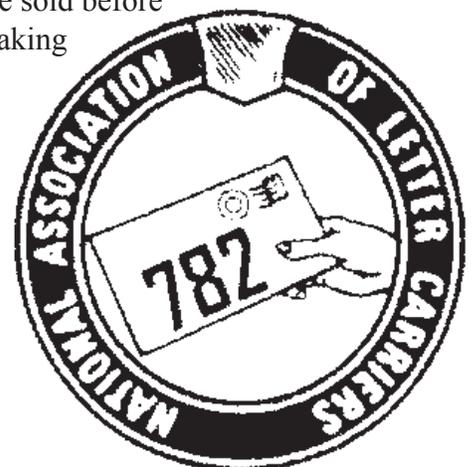
So what is this advertising message about? **THIS** is an MDA fundraiser. We are asking for **YOUR** help!!!!!!

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!



KIM.....WISE AND ORGANIZED

by Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782
 “poet at large” and very tall.....liar !!

SHE PREFERS WE CALL HER “KIM”,
 AND, OH, NOT KIMBERLY!
 SHE KEEPS EVERYTHING IN ORDER,
 I KNOW, WE’D ALL AGREE!

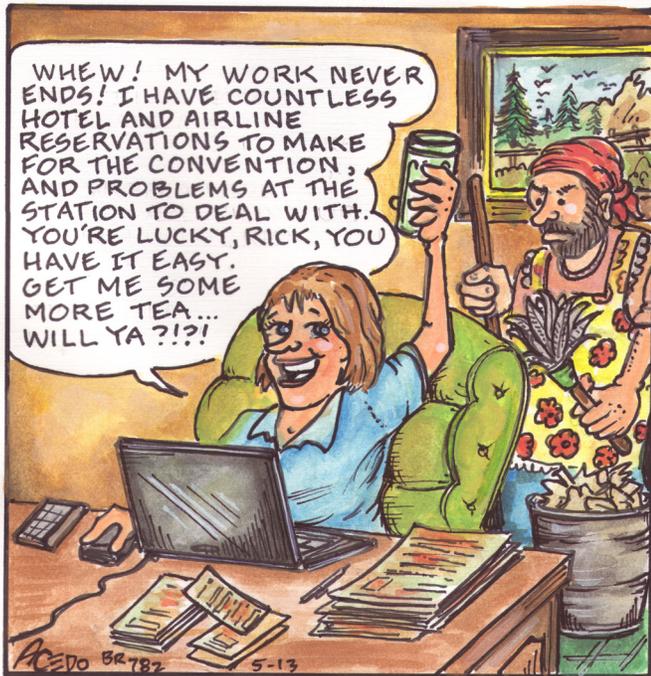
SHE, MAKES COUNTLESS RESERVATIONS,
 FOR HOTELS, AND AIRLINES TOO,!
 SHE’S THE STEWARD, AT DOWNTOWN STATION,
 SOME, MIGHT CALL “THE ZOO”!



KIM’S A MOMMY, AND A GRANDMA,
 SHE’S A WIFE, AND SWEETHEART TOO!
 SHE’S A SECRETARY, AND A CARRIER,
 AT THE “NUT HOUSE”, THEY’RE ALL COO COO!

KIM, IS SO DARN ORGANIZED,
 IT ALMOST MAKES US SICK!
 YES,... WE KNOW HER SECRET,
 IT’S HER “OLD MAN,” and “SIDEKICK” RICK!

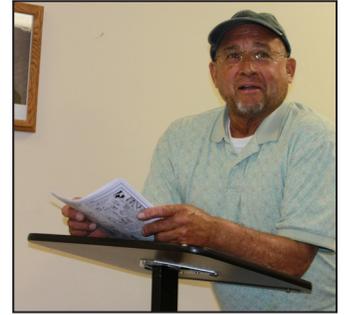
OUT THERE



OUT THERE



POTLUCK DECEMBER 19th GENERAL MEETING



MARK RAMIREZ
NALC Health Benefit Representative

Eat Healthy? “Bah Humbug!”

There are healthy decisions, we should all make,
Deep fry it in oil, or should I bake?

Too much of a good thing, it's not good.
If I had the willpower, I know I could.

But the Holidays are here, it's “Open Season” on food!!
I get hungry, and hungry, and I'm just in the mood.

There is tofu smoked turkey, and imitation ham.
And some artificial stuff that comes in a can.

I want tamales, real turkey, not healthy grains.
I want the bad stuff that tastes good that clogs up my veins!

I can eat tofu and soy most of the year.
But the Holidays, the bad stuff, and iced cold beer.

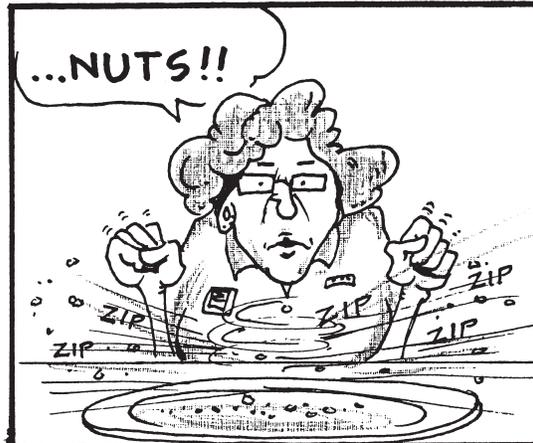
I want the real stuff, and lots of it, when I feed,
not chunks of something made from sea weed.

Enjoy your soy protein, your veggie surprise.
Give the bad stuff that tastes great, not food in disguise!!!

OUT THERE



OUT THERE



Mark Ramirez has been writing poems which have appeared in our newsletter for many years! *And his talent is very much appreciated.*

This particular page was featured in the December 2006 issue.

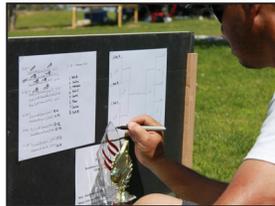
Thank You, “Hoser”!

BASIL ZUNIGA



Volleyball Tournament

Pictures on these pages courtesy of NALC Branch 782 Photographer Anita Holderman.



2013

See more photos in the newsletter Web version!!!







A few scenes from the retirement party....



36
Years!

VETERANS CORNER

Buying Back Your Credited Military Time

If you are a current federal employee with prior military service you should consider making a deposit for your military service.

There are two reasons why making a military deposit may be beneficial:

YOU COULD RETIRE SOONER, OR

YOU CAN INCREASE YOUR RETIREMENT ANNUITY.

By making this deposit, your years of military service are included in your civilian retirement computation, just as if you performed that service under your current retirement system. Unless you are receiving a military retirement, making a military deposit is usually a great deal, often paying for itself within a year or two of retirement.

RETIRE SOONER: A military deposit may allow you to retire from your civilian position earlier than with your civilian service alone. If you reach your Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) before you attain the required years of service, this may be your ticket to retire earlier than anticipated. For example, if you began your federal civilian career at age 28 as a FERS employee and, you were born in 1955, your MRA is 56, but you will not attain 30 years of federal civilian service until you reach age 58. If you made a deposit for your four years of active duty military service, you could retire at the MRA of 56 – *two years earlier than if you did not make the deposit.*

(Note: If you are covered under the Special Retirement provisions for Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, Air Traffic Controllers, and Military Reserve Technicians the military service cannot be credited towards the 20 years of special retirement coverage for retirement eligibility, but will be used in computing your annuity.)

INCREASED ANNUITY: Making a military deposit will increase your federal retirement annuity. By making the deposit, you are purchasing a guaranteed monthly annuity payable when you retire. The annuity is paid directly to you in the form of monthly payments for the rest of your life (and your spouse's life if you elect a spousal annuity).

The military deposit is fully refundable if you change your mind and want a refund of the deposit. To determine if this deposit is advantageous to you, simply compare the total military deposit amount to the increase in retirement income. Then determine how long before the increase in your retirement annuity will pay for the military deposit amount. For example, let's say you have four years of military service and five years of federal service as a FERS employee.

High-three Salary: You don't know what your high-three salary will be when you retire, but you decide to use your current salary of \$60,000 as your high-three salary.

Military Deposit Amount: Your payroll or HR office determines your military deposit amount will be \$2,600 for four years of military service.

Computation: If you are a FERS employee, your retirement annuity is increased 1% for each additional year of service. So the computation is: 4 years of additional service x 1% per year x \$60,000 = \$2400 yearly increase in retirement income attributable directly to the one-time military deposit. That is a **\$200 per month increase in your annuity payable FOR YOUR ENTIRE LIFE.**

Conclusion: In this example, it took just one year and one month of retirement income attributable to the military service to equal the entire military deposit amount. This is the break-even point. *The higher annuity income continues for as long as you live, and will be also used to compute a spousal annuity if applicable.* If you plan to spend more than 13 months receiving this annuity, the deposit is beneficial.

If you are a CSRS employee the military deposit amount is higher, but the return is also higher:

X years of military service x 2% per year x high 3 salary = **ANNUAL ANNUITY INCREASE.**

This calculation does not include the time value of money considerations. For those analytical types, TVM calculations would be appropriate, for everyone else, let's keep it simple since this is normally such a short period of time.

(Source: Federal Retirement – Linda Sherman)

A Final Closing Remark for ALL Military Veterans

Thank you again from the National Association of Letter Carriers, 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 716-842-4752, e-mail MrR2Leon@aol.com or Branch 3 (716) 631-3940, e-mail NALCB3@aol.com

Editor-guy note: This article is courtesy of the Buffalo, NY NALC Branch 3 **BUZZ** published in May 2013

Congratulations, Mary!!!

One of the things that we look forward to do in life, eventually, is to RETIRE. For some it's around the corner and for others it's still a long road ahead.

During my time span as a Carrier I have seen a few people come and go for different reasons and one of them is to join the "Last Punch Bunch". I am happy to be able to celebrate Mary Breeding—my fellow co-worker and friend—in her retirement of almost 27 years in the Postal Service as a Letter Carrier.

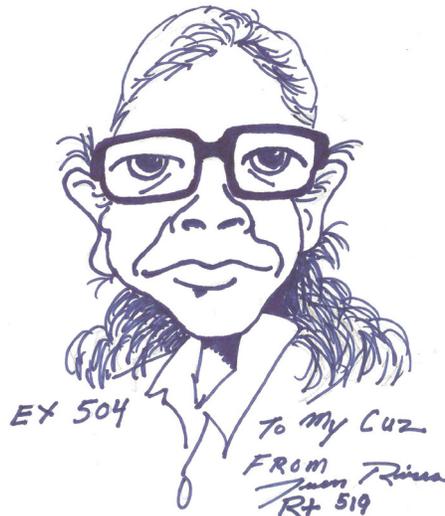
Mary started her career with the Postal Service at the tender age of 36 in August 1986. She immediately started as a Letter Carrier where she was a Part-Time Flex (PTF) for only 3 months. Mary was assigned to Brundage Post office from 1986-1987. She then transferred to Oildale from 1987-1991, then East Bakersfield from 1991-2006 and ended her journey at Brundage from 2006-2013.

Mary's parents had told her that getting a job with the Postal Service was a good job to have and to not quit. She said that the first few weeks were way too hard and she was on the verge of quitting but she was not a quitter. Mary persevered and it's been a great and memorable venture that she does not regret taking.

Mary reminisced about some of her experiences during her time and wanted to share....

Most Memorable: Mary was pregnant and was carrying mail at Oildale station. She had carpal tunnel and was having a hard time when her Supervisor Bill Elms was caring enough to check up on

*I'm OUT THE DOOR
AIN'T COMING BACK NO MORE!*



her and make sure she was doing well. Mary says, "I always thought that was really nice."

Most Scariest: Mary did a swing on Judy Roberson's route (in the Southgate/Mahoney area) when a man came at her to get his mail in a drunken state. She felt threatened so she started to drive away when he threw a beer bottle at her. The bottle ended up breaking the jeep's window. Mary later found out that the man had just gotten out of jail for knifing somebody.

Mary has had four dog bites. One of them was when she was on Jesse Subia's route for the day. As she entered the yard because the mailbox was at the house, she noticed a thick chain around the tree *with no dog*. As she pondered the situation and slowly backed up, she discovered it was too late! She was bitten on the leg by a German Shepherd.



Mary Breeding joins "The Last Punch Bunch"!

Mary truly enjoyed her time at East Bakersfield Station. Throughout her time there, she had a walking route and made a lot of friends and got to know her customers well. One of her customers had lupus and Mary would visit her after work.

Mary always thought she would be retiring out of the East Bakersfield Station after she transferred out of Brundage back in 1987. Mary will forever remember Judy Roberson telling her that "One day you will be returning home." And when she did, Judy said "You're back home!"

During her journey, Mary created memories with many nice patrons, gained a lot of respect for her co-workers and established a great "work" family. This made it all worthwhile and she thanks God that she seized the opportunity to be a Letter Carrier.

Mary does have a special request. She wants to thank everyone for their help and support along the way.

Happy Retirement Mary!

MABEL BULLIS



Editor-guy Note: There are more pictures highlighting Mary Breeding's retirement in the web version. Some were taken at Brundage and others at Noriega's for a Basque dinner.



Congratulations, Mary!!!
Remember the fun!



from the
editor-guy:

Jay PW has left the building

OUT THERE



Yes, dear brothers and sisters, the last day of my Letter Carrier career is Friday May 31, 2013!!! October 3, 1993-May 31, 2013. Nineteen is a prime number, 19 years of the prime of my life. I like prime numbers; 4 months to go to 20 means through the whole summer..."No, Thank You!"

Poke me with a toothpick, I'm done! Tired, tired of the big obvious things like, well, you know, but it's all the little annoyances. Tired of paper cuts, snapping rubber bands, spider webs and spiders and other bugs and the extreme elements. Although I fully enjoy working outdoors, 7 hours is a bit much. Tired of the weight, the repetitive motion, the heavy lifting, the widespread chronic pain. Every morning I wake up and wonder, "What's going to hurt me today?" They see it their way, I got mine, I'll be slippin' away.

October 2012, I told God how delighted I am with HIM in me and wrote out the desires of my heart as Psalm 37: 4 says to do. "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." So my #1 was to NOT carry the mail anymore, #2 to get to do massage and healing more. So, ya, 6 months later, THANK-YOU LORD for answered prayer.

Clearly he orchestrated everything just as it is happening. I am so incredibly blessed! Now I can get on with my life and fill my days with much more meaningful pastimes. But, on that note, I will SO miss my customers. Oh ya, duh I live near. I will go visit.

I have served faithfully and LOVED my job for nineteen, make that 18 years. The love was wearing thin for the last year, years. Prime time to hang my satchel for good and bid adieu.

And, off into the world to find my fortune I go ohoh oh mm mmm mmm mm, I gooo,

Jay P W

Known as: Michelle Patterson Storms Costa

**Just
What
I
Kneaded**
Massage by
Michele Costa
Licensed C.M.P.
FEELS GOOD, GOOD FOR YOU
RELAXATION
STRESS REDUCTION
call 661-703-6424

P.S. To all you old timers, in a sing-song voice,
"I'm going to beat you outta here!"
Naturally I will miss all my fellow brothers
& sisters. But hey, you know how to reach me.
P.P.S. My route produced 70 tubs of
food for the food drive!

I am so glad that Michelle took the time to write this letter to me. Although she didn't specifically request that I publish it in the newsletter, she didn't tell me that she didn't want it posted. So, thank you, Michelle!

Having been around for a few years, I find it sad when people leave this Letter Carrier world and I find out about it after they've left. However, I am excited to think that they are seeking something that they feel passionate about! I'm thinking that *this* is what Michelle is doing... God bless her!!!

Starting out on a fresh adventure can be exciting!

With that in mind, I am going to point out something that should be fairly evident: There are *a lot* of new people who have recently walked through the doors at our units and are learning how to survive this job of delivering the mail.

Remember what it was like when you first started out? Exciting? Intimidating? Exhausting? Frustrating?

We know that not all of them are going to choose to stay here for the long term. But, leave them with a good impression of us.

BASIL ZUNIGA



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

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

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

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

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

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www.782nalc.com**

Rick Plummer, Webmaster



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Permit Number 32

General Meeting Tuesday May 28, 2013 7:00 p.m.

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Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

100,000 Pounds??

Yup. For details and amazing pictures of us doing what we do, check out pages 8 - 12...

OUT THERE

\$500?

*YOU have a
chance to win!*

*What do YOU
have to do???*

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



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