

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 5

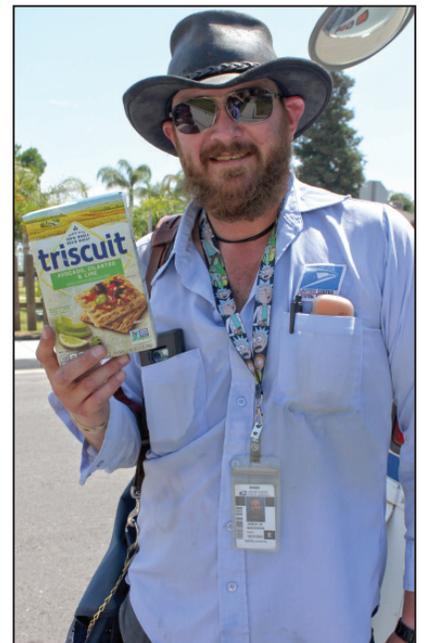
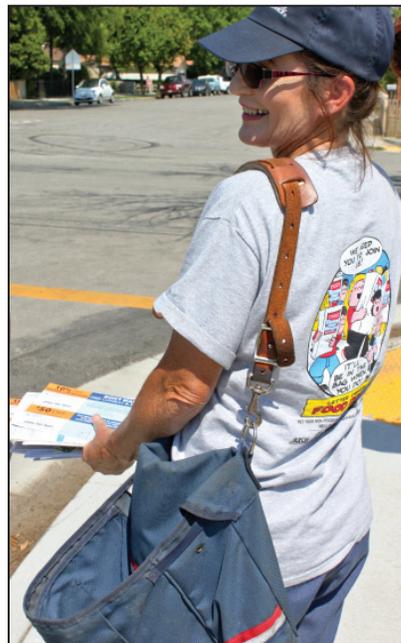
WEB VERSION

MAY 2019

One Item at a time = **MILLIONS OF POUNDS!!!**



LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE
SAT., MAY 11, 2019



National Association of Letter Carriers

The 27th Annual Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive

Continued on pages 2 - 3...



Our Success is: *Because of YOU...*

WE achieved a total of 118,215 pounds in 2018. How much can WE collect in 2019??



UFCW 8
GOLDEN STATE
AFL-CIO
AMERICA'S UNIONS



Pictures courtesy of Branch 782 Photographer Anita Holderman; Norma Hamer, Shafter Shop Steward; Mike Munoz, Arvin Shop Steward

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF LETTER CARRIERS
**Stamp
Out
Hunger**
FOOD DRIVE



Continued in web version: WWW.782NALC.COM

Minutes of the April 2019 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 24th day of April, 2019 at the branch office, Bakersfield . The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms David Treto. All members of the Executive Board were present. The Stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Oildale , Shafter, South, Stockdale and Wasco. Also present was Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; Assistant Newsletter Editor/ Social and Recreation Committee Rep. Paul Greenfield; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet, and Assistant Recording Secretary Norma Hamer. The Minutes of the March 27, 2019 meeting were read by Asst. Recording Secretary Norma Hamer and accepted with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: An application was received from Adrian Cermeno, Delano; and Christopher Reynoso, Stockdale.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega reported “nothing.” Basil Zuniga discussed the amount of food collected for the Food Drive . He discussed an article in the web version about a Portland Carrier who was making a delivery. The customer had a package to be picked up and the supervisor who was with the Carrier would not allow the Carrier to pick up the parcel because the customer had not made the request through the office. Basil discussed that Carrier Ronnie Mireles had been sick and recently passed away. He then discussed what should be done when a Carrier dies. He will print the information in the newsletter next month. He encourages everyone to put it in a place where your loved ones can find it. Paul Greenfield reported that the Social and Recreation Committee will meet tomorrow. There will be a picnic on June 2 at Stramler Park . The cost will be \$5.00 per person. They are getting tickets to an Angel vs. Red Sox game on September 8, 1 p.m. Kim Gerdes reported that there were no book sales this month. There are 590 books remaining. Shari Sharp reported that they had a meeting with the Food Drive Coordinators today. The shirts are in. See Shari to pick them up. The local grocery union will be handing out the bags in front of select stores from May 6 -10. Mike Towery shared a letter signed by Area Vice President Larry Munoz and Bryant Almario, National Business Agent, supporting the Food

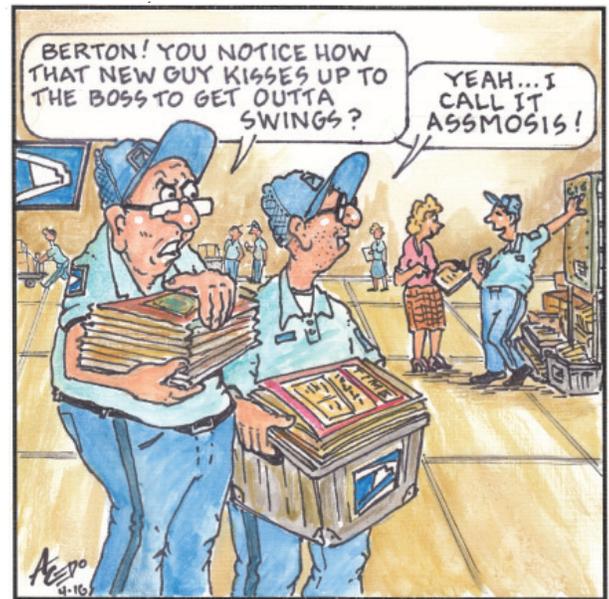
Drive . The letter states all cards should be delivered on Wednesday and bags the next day. All cards and bags must be delivered.

NEW BUSINESS: Teresa Ortega read the adjustments to the budget as reported by the Budget Committee.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery asked for a moment of silence for Ronnie Mireles and Patty McMahon. He also included, in the moment

of silence, the Carrier in Albuquerque, New Mexico who was killed trying to help during a domestic dispute. A discussion was held regarding making sure family knows what to do in case of the death of a Carrier. Mike Towery discussed the Postal Service’s new proposed “Consolidated Casing” pilot program.

“OuT tHeRe”



IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: John Ortega discussed the Rap session. He also shared that the award the Branch was awarded for being 95% Organized.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY’S REPORT: Financial Secretary Anita Holderman reported that \$7,525.49 was collected for April 2019.

TREASURERS REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$80,463.02
Dues and Income	\$20,792.81
Total Balance	\$101,255.83
Total Expenses	\$11,121.13
Ending Balance	\$90,134.70

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Mike Towery, who donated it back to MDA. (\$26.00/\$26.00)

The Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Moninder Gill if had been present.

There were 43 members present. And one guest.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

KIM GERDES
Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Each and EVERY month,
Branch 782 sponsors a drawing
at the General Meeting
to encourage

YOU

to come to our
monthly Meeting*

Last month, Moninder Gill could have won \$500!

**YOU could win
\$500 this month!!!**

*THE FINE PRINT: To win the money
YOU have to be present when YOUR name is drawn...

Non-Members April 2019

Downtown Station
Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz
Jason Macknicki

South Station
Chanthorn Ped

Brundage/East Bakersfield
100% UNION!!!

Hillcrest
100% UNION!!!

Dole Court
100% UNION!!!

Stockdale
James Oh
Daniel Zuniga

Camino Media
100% UNION!!!

Arvin
100% UNION!!!

Avenal
100% UNION!!!

California City
100% UNION!!!

Delano
Cynthia V. Quebral
Daniela Barreto

Edwards AFB
100% UNION!!!

Lamont
100% UNION!!!

Mojave
100% UNION!!!

Ridgecrest
Kelly Treat

Shafter
Mae D. Voights
Laura M. New

Taft
K. J. Kaczmarek

Tehachapi
B. C. Den Beeman
Christina Cronauer

Trona
100% UNION!!!

Wasco
Eun Chong
Ramon Martinez

CCA names are in italics

There are only 16 non-members in all of the cities we serve!

PROPOSED NALC BRANCH 782 BY-LAWS CHANGES TO BE VOTED ON AT MAY 2019 MEETING

“After the proposed by-laws have been approved by the branch or state association, the proposed changes must be submitted to the Committee of Laws for approval. The NALC has a form to make it convenient for branches and state associations when submitting... All parts of the form must be completed, including the date of the first reading, notification, the date of the vote, and the signature of a branch officer... The exact wording of the prior language must be included, along with exact wording of the new language. If the prior language has been deleted, write “deleted” in the new language box. If the proposed language is new, write “new” in the current language box. Submit the form along with two copies of your current by-laws. Then mail the forms and two copies of the current by-laws to: Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Once received, the by-laws are date-stamped, and previous correspondence from the Committee of Laws to the branch or state association is attached for review by the assistant secretary-treasurer, who makes a recommendation to the Committee of Laws. The Committee of Laws has three outcomes to assign when reviewing proposed changes. They are: “Approved,” “Approved with exception(s)” and “In conflict with the National Constitution.” Approved with exception means the items listed as exceptions are in conflict and not approved. In order to remedy the exceptions and amend by-laws, the entire process contained in Article 15 of the NALC Constitution must be completed again. (This means submitting, notification, voting and mailing to the Committee of Laws.)

Provisions in by-laws may not be implemented without the approval of the Committee of Laws, pursuant to Article 15. Exceptions are by-laws fixing the time and place of meetings and dues. They become effective at the time determined by the branch or state. However, it is recommended that you send a copy to the Committee so that we have a record of the change or can notify you of any problems that may exist with the language.”

Abridged article courtesy of a report by then-NALC Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Judy Willoughby. Originally published in the June 2015 *Postal Record*.

Article IV Section 1

Current Language

SECTION 1. There shall be a minimum dues structure which shall consist of the following: Each member shall pay monthly dues equal to two hours base pay for a NALC Grade 1, Step D letter carrier employed by the United States Postal Service. One third of such dues shall be allocated to the National Union and shall be designated the “National per capita tax”. The remaining two thirds of such dues shall

Continued on next page...

be allocated to the member's branch and shall be designated "minimum branch dues". Members with fifty (50) years of membership are exempt from the paying of dues, fines and assessments.

Proposed New Language

SECTION 1. There shall be a minimum dues structure which shall consist of the following: After November 24, 2018, each member shall pay monthly dues equal to two hours base pay for a NALC Step D letter carrier in the consolidated career City Carrier grade level (Table One) implemented on that date. One third of such dues shall be allocated to the National Union and shall be designated the "National per capita tax". The remaining two thirds of such dues shall be allocated to the member's branch and shall be designated "minimum branch dues". Members with fifty (50) years of membership are exempt from the paying of dues, fines and assessments.

Article VI Section 5

Current Language

TREASURER

SECTION 5. The Treasurer shall receive, receipt for and disburse all moneys of the Branch, and keep a regular account thereof. He/she shall pay all warrants drawn on him/her by the Recording Secretary voted by the Branch and signed by the President and have all accounts receipt upon payment of the same. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all tax filings of the Branch, deposits of Branch funds, and proper filing and recording of all financial transactions.

He/she shall, whenever requested by the President, and at the end of his/her term, make a report showing his/her receipts, disbursements and amount of money on hand and deliver his/her books, papers and money to his/her successor, when qualified. The Treasurer shall perform any other duties assigned by the Branch President.

Required meetings for this office are: Executive Board and the Branch General Meeting.

Proposed New Language

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Required meetings for this office are: Executive Board, Shop Steward and the Branch General Meeting.

Article VI Section 7

Current Language

HEALTH BENEFITS AND MBA REPRESENTATIVE

SECTION 7.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 4 Section 3 of the Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches, the offices of Health Benefits and MBA Representatives have been combined and his/her duties and responsibilities will be those outlined in Article 6 Sections 7 and 8 of the Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches. In addition, the Health Benefits and MBA Representative will provide information to the Shop Stewards of each station in order that they will be familiar with the coverage's provided. The Health Benefits and MBA Representative shall perform any other duties assigned by the Branch President.

The required meetings of this Office are: Executive Board, Shop Steward, 935 Area Meeting and Branch General Meeting.

Proposed New Language

HEALTH BENEFITS AND MBA REPRESENTATIVE SECTION 7.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 4 Section 3 of the Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches, the offices of Health Benefits and MBA Representatives have been combined and his/her duties and responsibilities will be those outlined in Article 6 Sections 7 and 8 of the Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches. In addition, the Health Benefits and MBA Representative will provide information to the Shop Stewards of each station in order that they will be familiar with the coverage's provided. The Health Benefits and MBA Representative shall perform any other duties assigned by the Branch President.

The required meetings of this Office are: Executive Board, 935 Area Meeting and Branch General Meeting.

Article VII Section 1.B

Current Language

B. Shop Stewards and alternate shop stewards will be compensated the equivalent of the number of hours listed at NALC Grade 2 Step "O" letter carrier hourly wage in effect April 1st and October 1st rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

- Shop Steward 1 - 1 hour (New steward, needs help to file Informal "A" grievances)
- Shop Steward 2 - 3 hours (Proficient in processing Informal "A" grievances)
- Shop Steward 3 - 4 hours (Proficient in processing Informal and Formal "A" grievances)
- Shop Steward 4 - 5 hours Proficient in processing Informal and Formal "A" grievances, Step "B" grievance appeals and assists other units in the handling of grievances).

In addition, each Shop Steward will be compensated \$20.00 for each of the required meetings as stipulated in Article VI. Any Shop Steward representing an office in excess of 40 miles from the Branch office will be compensated an additional \$20.00 in his/her monthly stipend and \$50.00 for each quarterly area meeting attended in his/her area. Shop Stewards shall only be eligible for one form of meeting compensation

Any shop steward or officer designated to fill a vacant steward position will be compensated an additional \$35.00 per month.

Continued on next page...

Proposed New Language

B. 1. Shop Stewards and alternate shop stewards will be compensated the equivalent of the number of hours listed at NALC Grade 2 Step “O” letter carrier hourly wage in effect April 1st and October 1st rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Shop Steward 1 - 0 hours (Trainee, potential new steward in training and attending meetings)

Shop Steward 2 - 1 hour (New steward, needs help to file Informal “A” grievances)

Shop Steward 3 - 3 hours (Proficient in processing Informal “A” grievances)

Shop Steward 4 - 4 hours (Proficient in processing Informal and Formal “A” grievances)

Shop Steward 5 - 6 hours (Proficient in processing Informal and Formal “A” grievances, Step “B” grievance appeals and assists in other units in the handling of grievances)

2. In addition, each Shop Steward will be compensated \$20.00 for each of the required meetings as stipulated in Article VI. Any Shop Steward representing an office in excess of 40 miles from the Branch office will be compensated an additional \$20.00 in his/her monthly stipend and \$50.00 for each quarterly area meeting attended in his/her area. Shop Stewards shall only be eligible for one form of meeting compensation

3. Any shop steward who is also an elected officer will receive the higher pay of the two and compensated an additional \$35 for the second role of shop steward or officer. Additionally, any shop steward or officer designated to fill an additional vacant steward position will be compensated an additional \$35 per month

Article VII Section 1.D

Current Language

No language

Proposed New Language

D. Any reference to NALC Grade 2 Step “O” letter carrier hourly will be the listed hourly basic rates from Table 1 City Carrier Schedule Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees of the consolidated career City Carrier pay schedule.

Article X Section 8

Current Language

SECTION 8. A yearly branch budget beginning on July 1st will be submitted by the executive board no later than the May general membership meeting and will be voted upon at the June general membership meeting. The branch officers and executive board will have the authority to allocate funds to cover expenditures up to the budgeted amounts. Any adjustments to the budgeted amounts will be brought to the membership to be voted upon.

Proposed New Language

SECTION 8. A yearly branch budget beginning on July 1st will be submitted by the Executive Board no later than the May general membership meeting and will be voted upon at the June

general membership meeting. The Executive Board will have the authority to allocate funds to cover expenditures up to the budgeted amounts. The branch Executive Board will also have the authority to transfer money between budget categories to cover expenditures with the membership being notified at the General membership meeting of any adjustments, whether increase or decrease, to the budgeted amounts.

Article X Section 11

Current Language

No current language

Proposed New Language

SECTION 11. The Executive Board is authorized to spend up to \$3500 per year from the Rental Saving Account to make necessary repairs or modifications to the rental building with the membership being notified of the expenditure at the General membership meeting. This is in addition to the budgeted amount listed in the Building Fund category of the yearly budget.

ARTICLE 15, NALC CONSTITUTION

By-laws of Branches and State Associations

“Each Branch or State Association may make, alter, or rescind such by-laws, rules, and regulations from time to time as may be deemed most expedient, providing they do not in any way conflict with this Constitution. By-laws of branches may be amended at any regular meeting of the branch, provided the amendment has been submitted in writing at the last previous regular branch meeting, and suitable notification to members shall be made at least ten (10) days before the regular meeting at which the vote is to be taken. By-laws and amendments thereto, fixing the amount of initiation fees, dues, and reinstatement fees, or the time and place of meetings, shall become effective at the time determined by the Branch or State Association. All other by-laws must be submitted in duplicate to the Chairperson of the Committee of Laws and shall not become effective until approved by the Committee of Laws as provided in Article 11, Sec. 3, of this Constitution.”

NALC democracy is firmly rooted in a written constitution that spells out election procedures, officers’ duties, convention responsibilities, and other key matters. NALC’s constitution has evolved over the years to meet the union’s changing needs **AND TO STRENGTHEN MEMBERS’ CONTROL OVER UNION AFFAIRS.** (*emphasis added.*) The NALC Constitution sets the governance structure for the national organization, including national officers and local branches. It also contains provisions related to State Letter Carrier Associations, the U.S. Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association, and the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

The National Association of Letter Carriers is the sole representative of City Delivery Letter Carriers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. Since it was founded in Milwaukee in 1889, the NALC has had a long and distinguished history of defending the rights of Letter Carriers before abusive supervisors, unfair presidential administrations and indifferent Congresses. NALC is the only force that fights to protect the interests of City Letter Carriers. The NALC is governed both by a constitution and by the will of delegates to NALC’s biennial national conventions. For day-to-day operations, NALC’s Executive Council leads the union. The Council is made up of ten resident national officers: President, Executive Vice President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Director of City Delivery, Director of Safety and Health, Director of Retired Members, Director of Life Insurance and Director of the NALC Health Benefit Plan. Three Trustees are also on the Council, as are the National Business Agents who represent each of the NALC’s geographical regions.

But NALC’s real strength, power and representation start at the local level, where members belonging to more than 2,000 locals (known as branches) throughout the country direct the work of the union through democratic voting.

Sourced and adapted from various items in the NALC website which can be found at <https://www.nalc.org/>

A Moment of Your Time

by Pam Kraft, Trustee
NALC Branch 4374



Sometimes making a difference only takes a moment of your time. Sometimes it may be a simple act of kindness, sometimes it is a decision that takes a bit of courage. Each of us have those choices to make throughout our lives.

Time is precious, but a moment of your time can make a difference in someone else's life. There are moments in time we savor fondly, some we wish we could change, but regardless time keeps rolling along.

How we choose to use time is controlled by many factors, work schedules, family commitments, and the actions, or inaction of others. Every day, every week, outside factors can change our lives. In the past month weather conditions affected our lives and schedules in a way that we couldn't control. A moment in time forever changed the outcome of a championship football game. Some of these events or moments are impactful, some insignificant, but how we act or react can affect so many things.

There are moments that will define who you are, and what you stand for, and who you stand with. When those moments come along will you stand up for what is right, will you go with "the flow," or just stand by and do nothing even when you know someone is being maligned, attacked, treated poorly, or the victim of some injustice. Sometimes silence speaks louder than words.

Certainly, others will make decisions that can impact your life, perhaps change your life forever, this I know. Decisions you make can change someone else's life in a positive or negative way. Can you be that someone who steps up in a positive way to help at your workplace? You can help in so many ways. You can help by being the "eyes and ears" on the workroom floor for the stewards, or coworkers, you can be proactive watching out for the new CCA's or letter carriers who don't have the experience you may have. Sometimes a simple act of kindness, a gesture, looking out for your coworkers who may need your help is so important. Do you remember the people who tried to look out for you when you were a new employee? Do you recall when a steward helped

you, answered a question for you, or looked out for your well-being?

I'm not asking you to do anything other than take a moment of your time to help. If you see something, hear something, know someone needs help, someone is hurt, if you witnessed something that causes you concern, talk to your steward. Your stewards can't be everywhere, so never assume they are aware of everything that happens in the office or in the field. A moment of your time can make a difference.

The best way to help is simply take a moment of your time. It's not difficult to see a steward, if your supervisor wants to know what it's about, simply say I have a question, or say it's a personal issue. There are many ways to get information to your stewards. Stewards get some of their best information before work, after work, on break, in the parking lot, but please be considerate of their time, they are always busy. And of course, there's always technology, a text message!

Do your part, keep a notebook, a journal, do this for your own benefit too. Keep track of your hours, clock rings, encourage your coworkers to do the same, write down information, what you see and hear. We're all in this together, be the help your stewards and coworkers need.

Remember, it's only a moment of your time. It only takes a moment to make a moment!

LOOK OUT
FOR EACH OTHER



This message (courtesy of the Center Line, Michigan Branch 4374 February 2019 *Front Lines*) really does deserve a moment of your time...

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

You Win Supporters by Addition, Not Subtraction

Recently presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders did a town hall on Fox News. Yes, you heard that right. *Fox News*. In view of the shuttered Bethlehem steel plant, he took questions from the audience. The audience was much friendlier with him than the moderators, not surprisingly. And the audience included voters of all political stripes, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, you name it. I know there are those from both ends of the political spectrum who did not agree with him going into the lions' den, as it were. President Trump didn't like it, made it out to be a betrayal from his favorite network. Some on the left felt it was a waste of time. I mean, he's not going to convince any of "those people" to vote for him, right?

by *Eric Ellis*,
CSALC District 4 Officer

I actually applaud him for engaging those on the other side of the political fence or with those who disagree with him on most issues. That's how you win elections. America elected Ronald Reagan president because quite a few Democrats voted for him, at a point in time when Dems outnumbered Republicans nationwide. Part of being a successful politician is persuading others to move your way, at least to some degree. And getting things done means reaching across the aisle. On the issue of prescription drug reform, Bernie has teamed with legislators like Ted Cruz -yes, that Ted Cruz- to propose legislation to stop drug companies from charging outrageous amounts to consumers. They may not agree on much else, but if all of us pay less for life-saving medication someday, we can thank the art of reaching out to a political adversary.

On issues pertaining to our interests as letter carriers, we approach all members of the House and Senate to seek support. How successful are we? Let's look at two resolutions with majority support in the House as I write this article. House Resolution 33, which expresses the sense of the House that the postal service not be privatized, has 226 co-sponsors, 33 of them Republican. House Resolution 54, which expresses the sense of the House that six-day mail delivery continue, has 218 co-sponsors, 55 of them Republican. And how do we get Republicans to sign onto our bills, when almost all of them favor less government?

Most Republicans who sign onto our bills hail from rural areas. Do you think out-of-the-way places like Modesto, or Sanger, or Coalinga, would get regular mail delivery six days a week if Congress privatized the USPS? Not a bloody chance in the pit of Hades! Why? Simple economics, as it would not be profitable. And how would privatization or cutting mail delivery frequency affect the hiring of veterans within the postal service? Remember that the USPS hires more veterans than any other business or agency outside the Department of Defense. So does that make the preservation of the postal service and its delivery infrastructure a veterans issue? I would say that tens of thousands of veterans losing their jobs for no good reason makes it so.

And a growing minority of House Republicans agree with that sentiment. As we reach out to all members of Congress, regardless of political party, and seek common ground, we will preserve our jobs as letter carriers in a public postal service. *And as we build House and Senate majorities in favor of our issues, we build relationships that will cement our status as the world's premier delivery service that continues to deliver mail to American patrons six days a week. And one that gainfully employs over a hundred thousand veterans as a result.*

From the May 2019 *Postman's View* published by Fresno, California NALC Branch 231 — Eric's "home base". Thank you, Editor Gary Bottoms!!

Tales of Yore

by Mark Woodbury, Editor
NALC Branch 2555

“The Comfort Stop”

You probably guessed that sooner or later we’d get around to that subject.

I remember when I was a newbie — a very long time ago. I asked an old-timer why they called bathroom breaks “comfort stops”. It seemed rather a quaint notion to me, a phrase leftover perhaps from by-gone days. “Ah,” he said, “That’s because a comfort stop is supposed to be much more than a bathroom break. Back in the day, before we had heaters in the vehicles or even vehicles, you could duck inside a gas station or a store to ward off frostbite in the winter or heatstroke in the summer.”

Nowadays, despite increasingly wild weather due to climate change, they do everything they can to speed you up — which means eliminating (so to speak) comfort stops. Basic postal contradictory message: *They tell you to keep hydrated but limit bathroom breaks and still expect you not to explode.*

And, we’ve all had our desperate moments and close calls!

Jim P. used to talk about being saved by a certain floor drain in a certain garage on his route. And then, one time Brian W availed himself in some thick bushes in an out-of-the-way spot. He was startled by a rustling behind him and turned around to see a large, curious raccoon watching him intently.

And, if you think you got it tough, just consider the poor rural Carrier and how many gas stations he’s got out there in the sticks! (*Guys you think we have it rough? Ask a woman!*)

I remember one afternoon after I had just come back from my city route and my case was right next to the postmaster’s office. (I don’t know why they kept doing that.) I could hear postmaster Keith Mishler in there chuckling to himself. Keith was a pretty good old guy when he wasn’t hollering at me so I went in there and asked him what was so funny. He said he just got a phone call from a lady on Frank G.s rural route. She had just observed Frank jump out of his Subaru Forester and dash off into the cornfield. She said he was in there about ten minutes before he came out, got in his truck and drove away. She wanted to know what he was doing all that time there in the cornfield. I laughed and shook my head. “What did you tell her, Keith?” “I’ll ask

him about when he gets back.” Then we both laughed.

“What I want to know,” I said. “is what those Rurals use when they’re done, the shucks or the cob?” “Ouch!” he responded, wincing.

Then, at St. Johns, we had, “Windy Wednesdays.” (So-called because they followed inevitably after “Taco Tuesday Nite” at the local road house.)

This sad state of affairs was caused as a result of overindulgence the night before by Mitch our City-1 Carrier. And, it usually meant big trouble for City-2 Carrier Bimb who had to case mail directly behind him. The only warning that poor guy ever got was when you heard Mitch say, “Take a walk, Bimb.” Or, on especially *f-o-g-g-y* days he’d add, “Better make that a run, Bimber!”

Then, you’d hear coming from the City-2 case: “*What?...*” followed 10 seconds later by, “*Aw, Gawd!...NOT again! Damn you, MITCHELL! Put a cork in it for chrissake, would ya!*”

“OuT tHeRe”



“OuT tHeRe”



N.A.L.C. BR. 782 - BAKERSFIELD, CA. THANKS DERRICK HILLGREST

Back at City-4, even I wasn’t safe from this and would soon — eyes streaming — have to bail out of my case seeking slightly fresher air. Dougie, the City-3 Carrier, was there as well saying something like, “What is that stench?! Daria, did you forget to wipe your shoes again after you left the barn!” (Daria had livestock: horses... goats...and even potbelly pigs.)

Supervisor Harvey, seeing a half dozen Carriers away from their cases, frantically waving their hands in front of their faces would say, “Gawd, is it Wednesday already...? *It must be Wednesday....*”

Article courtesy of the East Lansing, Michigan NALC Branch 2555 *SPARTAN NEWS* published in March - April 2019. Many thanks to book author and Branch 2555 Editor, my friend Mark Woodbury! I appreciate the way he turns and shapes the accounts and stories in his writing! He underscores the fact that various circumstances we deal with in our Carrier world are pretty universal wherever we deliver in the U.S. Many thanks, again, also to Fred Acedo, Branch 782 “Nostradamus Cartoonist”! One cartoon was drawn in 2015 and the other in 2017.

The Stockdale (93309) Station “Wall of Honor”



The day that Gary Hemingway retired was a festive one at Stockdale!



Photos by Branch Photographer Anita Holderman

Why would anyone ever want to retire???

OUT THERE



“OuT tHeRe”



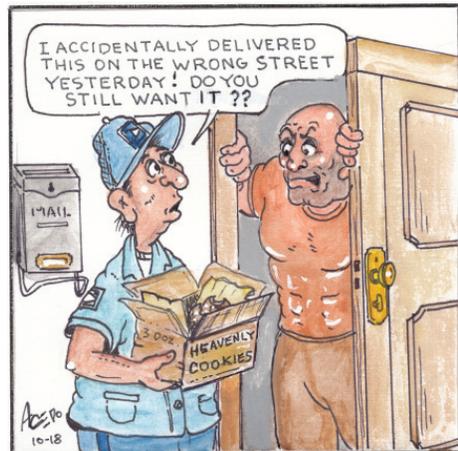
“OuT tHeRe”



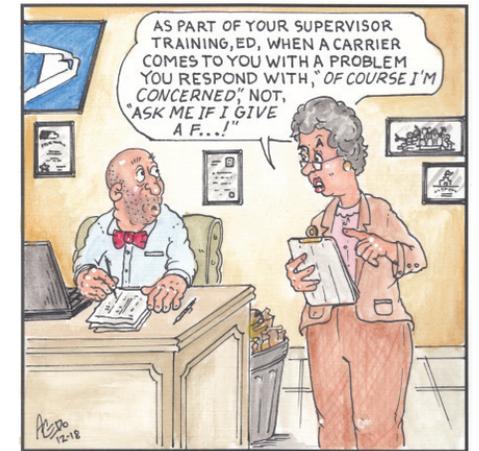
“OuT tHeRe”



“OuT tHeRe”



“OuT tHeRe”



There might be a few reasons. Yup...

Continued on next page



(left to right) Janet Bobadilla, Melissa Kelley, Rosie Cardenas, Yuri Garcia, Christine Leal, Maria Valenzuela, Randy Courson, Brian Davis, Unnamed, Robin Richard, Unnamed, Lucky Tiwana, Sarbjit Sodhi, Anita Holderman, Aaron Gutierrez, Vince Gonzalez, Gerald Carcha, and kneeling – Isaconie Celestino

Yes, the Stockdale Carriers say, “Thank You, Elsie! Enjoy Retirement!!”

Retirement. *Retirement...* “RETIREMENT FOR ME?”

THAT is a concept that somehow still doesn’t seem to “fit”. Elsie has always worked. And, she has **always** worked hard!! *Retire??*

Waitressing isn’t easy. Elsie knows that. She had worked as a waitress for eight years in Buttonwillow, California at the 76 Truck Stop. Lots of long hours! Lots of walking! Commuting every day from Southwest Bakersfield. Hard work. She did that.

Celestine told her the Post Office was hiring and advised her that there would be long hours and lots of walking.

But, no commuting? Hmm... Better pay? Benefits, too? Better pay **AND** benefits? “Maybe, I should check this out...”



March 14, 1987 was the day that she officially walked through the door as a potential postal employee. All she really knew was that she was going to work hard.

(She wasn’t sure how this new Letter Carrier venture would work out and she kept her waitress gig going for another two and-a-half months before she quit.)

Following the initial classroom training with Karl Herrera and Ray Pettus 32+ years ago, she was assigned to Stockdale as a 93309 employee. (As she recalls, the trainees were asked what part of Bakersfield they lived in. They were then assigned to units close to their homes.)

“Robbie” was her OJI and she spent three days with him learning everything about her new job. Well, maybe not. But, she did learn a lot about what she needed to do and discovered that, “Yes. There were long hours and lots of walking!”

After those first three days of way too much to absorb, but still knowing that she had to “work hard”, she was placed on a really sweet assignment. The Regular was a guy named L.C. Webb.

Although never actually confessing to this, Elsie was like almost every other new employee and she was a “runner” when she started out. And, L. C. called her out on this when she came back so soon on her first day on his route...

She won’t share what his advice was; but, she took it to heart *and* she still worked hard!

Asked to remember some of the folks who were around at Stockdale when she started out, she quickly recalled: Teresa Pena, Paul Skinner, CeCe Hernandez, Cindy Flores and Mike Bettis.

While at Stockdale, Elsie forged close relationships with many of her co-workers. Some of the women even started a tradition that they maintain to this day: “Thirsty Thursdays”! (Elsie recently had a small retirement celebration attended by some of her BFFs.)

After three years, Elsie shipped out as a newly minted Regular when she bid on a T-6 assignment. On her string were three 93301 Downtown routes and two individuals who stand out in her memory were Allen Springman and Bill Siefert. Two routes were at Brundage (93307) and, YES, she still continued to work hard!

Missing the 09s, Elsie went back there as an Unassigned Regular where she bounced around until she bid Route 930. The names of Annie Franey and Rosemary Arauza come to mind when asked about who was there then. Later, she became a T-6 because she had discovered that she got bored quickly when she had to deliver the same area all the time.

However, Stockdale was always home! Other old-timer “homies” were Leo Nusser, Phil Krause, Gary Hemingway, Bobby Cruz, Elaine Harbour, Jon Sudsbury

and Joe LaVoie. Speaking about them prompted Elsie to point out that things were much different back “in the day”.

“We used to help each other out if somebody needed to get off early to do something with their family. I loved my job and I loved the people I worked with. We all worked hard to get the mail delivered and we did it together!”

When speaking about dogs, Elsie explained that she only sprayed two dogs over the course of her entire career. One time she felt really bad because the dog — a furry Lab — probably only wanted to come and say hello to her.

Over the years, Elsie got along with all of her supervisors. She worked hard. They appreciated it. There were no issues. However, she would, too often, see how others were treated. Towards the end, she would often wonder, “How can some of those in management sleep at night?”

When asked about any specific events that are vivid memories, she described an incident when she was driving down Ming Avenue in a 3/4 ton and made a left-hand turn. The back door popped open. Tubs, filled with bundles of letters which she’d banded, dropped out into the intersection. She jumped out threw everything back in her vehicle and went about her business. Another time, she was working out of a push cart when it tipped over. Again, the mail fell out; but — everything banded in anticipation of delivery — she just gathered everything up and there was no problem. No harm. No foul.

Since Elsie has worked hard all of her life, she expects more of the same in retirement. Four grandchildren all live locally (for which she is thankful) and her Mother’s needs will continue to be a big focus for her.

Many friendships have survived and flourished through individual life changes. They have all been there for each other! Many folks are her friends as their postal careers were closely aligned: Sharold, Alma Kirby, Cindy, Rosemary, Sheila, Cece, Bobby... ***There’s just not enough room to mention them all!***

She *IS* going to miss her job. But, it was time!

Editor-guy note: Elsie had two stipulations for me: “1) You have to place my article by Sharold’s. 2) Use ALL of the 7 pictures I give you.” Well, mission accomplished...



There IS Life after Retirement!!

When I was hired in June of 1986, I was newly married with no kids. We raised 3 kids while I was working at the P.O. (and survived!)

I have really enjoyed my career as a mail carrier, starting in the 1100's and 1300's routes when they were at Stockdale. Eventually getting routes 937, 938, 928 and finally ended up being a T-6C which I loved). Of course, I have seen many changes great as the carriers before me and those after me will see. Now I was an "Old-timer".

I will miss the daily chatter around the office and ~~my~~ ^{the} "work" of my customers. The best thing to the life long friends I made while working here. We will continue to go on road trips, go for coffee and margaritas. Call me I'll come!

On June 29 2018 I collected my last paycheck from Stockdale after 32 years. My husband and I left that day on a 2 1/2 month cross country RV trip. That's how I started my retirement.

Branch 782 member Sharold McBride penned this message after she retired in mid-2018. Obviously, she hit the ground running! It's also how she started out...

Some friends from her tiny home town in upstate New York had followed oilfield jobs from Texas to Bakersfield. She came out to visit; and, after her return home, she decided to follow the California dream.

Looking back, she had no idea that her decision would result in a life so rich with love and friendship!

She and dear friends Cindy Flores and Elsie Flores (not related) were waitresses. Sharold's journey found her taking orders and dealing with hungry customers at many places including the Bakersfield Inn. But, the real money was in working the cocktail crowd and the Black Angus on Union Avenue was *the* place in town!

Money was good (despite being "stuffed" more than a few times). But, she realized that she just didn't want to be that 50-year old woman waiting tables.

She didn't want to go to school. She *did* like being in the outdoors. What kind of a job might be fun?

Sharold went to the library and checked out a book which was a study guide for anyone planning to take "The Test" for the USPS. (This was definitely before Google or cellphones!)

About a year after taking the test, she received a phone call informing her that a postal job was available in Taft. Because she was working pretty consistently, she

was concerned that her income might drop if she took the postal job.

She declined the opportunity. But, as she thought about it some more, she realized that waitressing provided no real long-term "benefits" (medical insurance, retirement, sick leave, annual leave, etc.). Luckily, she was contacted with another offer — and this time she decided that she would go for it!

Her seniority date was established on June 21, 1986. She was hired two weeks after Feliza Letourneau and two months before Alan Smith, Danny Blair and Sylvia Long.

Sharold recalls that there were some 8 - 10 folks in the group of new hires trained by Ray Pettus at the GMF. One of them, Danny Wallace, went on to join her at new home as a 93309 Carrier. She was pretty excited to be there despite being informed that Stockdale Station got the most mail of any Bakersfield unit. Ready to work, she remembered that it might have intimidated some folks but that she didn't mind the challenge. *She was ready to work!*

She spent one day with her OJI and laughs as most of her real training consisted of a supervisor handing her a map, the mail, and pointing her in a direction.

On one occasion she vividly recalls thinking to herself as she was driving a postal vehicle, "I have the U.S. mail... ***I have the U.S. mail!*** This is REALLY important stuff that I am responsible for!"

At that time, mail for the 93311 and 93313 zones was also delivered out of the same building.

Sharold had many chances to deliver over a wide area and spent a lot of time in the then-new Haggin Park neighborhoods



Stockdale Carriers were always known as being very productive. Here (l-r) Sheila Reichert, Sharold McBride, Josie, Cathy Amberg, Pam Mauk and Dale Wolf were captured at various points in their respective pregnancies. Must have been the water in 1988, right?

where she was told to go find Sharon Carter. She got to know Sheila Reichert who delivered to Campus Park.

Thinking about what life had been like back then gave her the chance to remember names like Robby, L.C. Webb, Phil Krause, Parker (who was an amazing Mailhandler who somehow kept up with the mountain of mail which arrived at the dock), Bobby Cruz, George Perez, Gordo Alvarez, Charlie Loven, Cliff Fehdrau and John Howlett.

Sharold "homesteaded" at Stockdale by remaining there for her entire time. She was sent out to help out at other units, but they were short-term assignments as she made Regular in only six months. She wound up spending time on 928. As her career wound down, she spent her last six years as a T-6 for Routes 936, 938, 940, 941 and 942.

Asked what was the best thing about becoming a Letter Carrier, there was no hesitation as she responded, "I was blessed

with so many, many dear friends!! We were all around the same age and we had children, raised them, aged and remained close through everything! We travelled together through the same phases of life. We were newbies. We dealt with the same weather, management and vehicles. We became senior Carriers. Our lives were shared. We went on day trips to Santa Barbara or San Francisco for wine tasting."

We celebrated our birthdays when we turned 50. We shared our lives!



When prodded, Sharold offered this advice to employees who have not retired, "If you manage your money well, you shouldn't be worried about whether or not you can afford to retire.



There is no promise that you are going to be alive in a few years. Enjoy life today and be ready to enjoy it even more later!"



Sharold's husband, Bryan, is a retired fireman. He has been retired for some time now and would always tell her how busy he was. She used to become frustrated wondering how that could be. *She* was still working every day and knew how hard it was to get all of her chores, errands, and other stuff done every day in the limited time she had.

Well...now that she has been retired for a number of months, she now understands! Active in retirement, golf is an almost daily activity. She loves it! She spends time with friends. Then, there is the travel. Her daughter is getting married next year and the planning process is well underway. There just aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done that is on her To Do list.

There is one event she talked about that is going to require an entirely different stand-alone segment in an upcoming Branch 782 newsletter. Leaving home one day, Sharold and her husband observed some suspicious activity around a Neighborhood Box Unit (NBU) {also referred to as an NDBCUC or MBUC}. Curious, they circled back. This, apparently, spooked the people they'd seen. The people drove away. Sharold saw that "the alleged perpetrators" had papered over their rear license plate, took a picture with her cell phone and she and her husband gave chase...

Bobby Cruz has left the building!

Retired 93309 Letter Carrier and Branch 782 member Michael Newton — who carried from 1970 to 2009 — used to deliver to apartments at 5101 Marsha “back in the day”. One of the residents told him he was looking for work and asked what it was like to be a mailman. Mike gave him a brief answer and mentioned that he’d heard that the post office was hiring.

A while later, the customer told him that he had taken “The Test”; and, one day, he told Michael, “I passed!!!” Michael remembers that the customer was almost jumping up and down he was so excited.

Bobby Cruz was that customer! His seniority date was June 13, 1980. More importantly, his retirement day was April 26, 2019.

Joe Lavoie, 93309 retired member, was stationed in Germany from 1971 - 1972 when he was in the Army. So was Bobby.



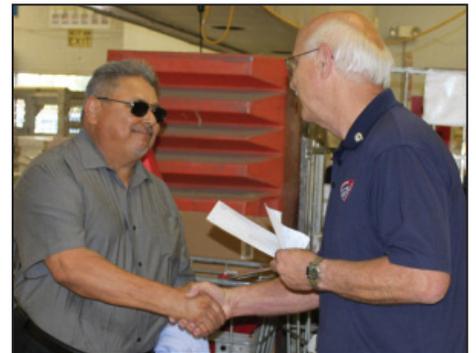
(And, as a point of interest, so too was Branch 782 President Mike Towery.)

However, Bobby had been stationed in eastern West Germany and was nowhere close to Joe’s base at Gerszewski Barracks in the city of Karlsruhe.

If you run the numbers, that gave Bobby over forty years of federal service when his military in the U.S. Army is properly — and justifiably — credited.



Branch 782 President Mike Towery and Bobby Cruz on April 26, 2019.



Pictures by Anita Holderman, Branch 782 Photographer



For Bobby, it was all about Family first!



Pictures supplied by the Cruz family and shared by Teresa Garcia, 03309 Supervisor

Another old-fart retired 93309 Carrier, Paul McCarthy, remembers that Bobby Cruz was always using this word: “Persevere”. **And, BOBBY DID!** After his recent cataract surgery, Paul is looking forward to being able to clearly see any pictures of Bobby in the Branch 782 newsletter. He went on to say, “I know that when Bobby is busy in retirement, he WILL persevere...”

Interestingly, once Bobby retired, he hit the ground running and started replacing a fence in his backyard. Although he knows that he could have persevered through the summer heat if he had to work on it later, he didn't want to mess around and he just got after it by himself— *bad knees and all!!*

Bobby's always been like that. *HE'S BEEN A WORKER!*

As a three sport athlete at Shafter High School he stayed pretty busy with schoolwork and sports. During the summer, he and many of the other football players, worked at local potatoe packing sheds. Seems like the coach knew that toting those 100 pound sacks of potatoes would establish a solid workout routine that would pay dividends.



That experience served him well as he was in pretty good shape when he was drafted into the U.S. Army in the early 70s. He was sent to Fort Ord for his basic training and then did Advanced Infantry Training Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas.

A sergeant who liked him selected Bobby and three others to go on a "special assignment" at the White Sands Missile Range. There, he policed the grounds. (Someone who was in the Army might remember what this entails.) The reason he was selected for this duty: There was a lot of "brass" who'd flown to the base to observe a test flight of a shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile, the FIM-43 Redeye. It was the precursor to the current weapon system — the FIM-92 Stinger.

Bobby was amazed at what he saw. It was almost like fireworks but way, WAY more cool!!



Six months later, he found himself attached to an I-Hawk missile battery close to the border of eastern West Germany.

In fact, it was so close that Bobby and the other troops could see the Russians looking at them from a distance of about two miles! [If you know anything about the geography of Europe during the Cold War, you may know that where Bobby and his fellow soldiers were placed was part of U.S. and NATO strategy, tactics and policy. The area is referred to as the Fulda Gap and it is pretty much smack dab in the middle of two corridors of lowlands where any Warsaw Pact attack was projected to roll through.]

When his enlistment ended in January 1974, Bobby returned home. Because he could turn a wrench, he kept busy doing a variety of odd jobs which took mechanical skill and the willingness to work hard. Capable, he could also work hard. And he did!

After a few years of doing "this and that", he took "The Test" and hoped for the best. In time, he was excited to learn that he'd been hired! Even if Bobby doesn't agree with Mike Newton's recollection ("He was almost jumping up and down he was so excited."), he does admit that he did feel really, really thrilled!

June 13, 1980 was the actual day that he made the jump to become a USPS employee; and, soon, much of Bobby's initiation into postal culture reminded him of his Army experiences. There was a certain amount of "hurry up and wait" punctuated by reading a whole lot of manuals and filling out a bunch of forms.

After a few days, he was sent as a 93309 Letter Carrier to his first unit: Bakersfield's Stockdale Station. Walt Hamm was the manager at that time and some of the "old-timers" who were at the cases in those days were: Cliff Fehdrau, Rudy Aros, Art Ornelas, Sal Salazar, Paul Alexander, Ray Franey (and Annie before she became a Franey), Paul McCarthy, Dale Pearce, L.C. Webb, John Howlett, Lou Garvin, Laverne Alexander, and Frank Diaz. The supervisors were Ron Carlon, Freddy Castro and Larry Taverner.

After shadowing Rudy Aros for two days followed by one day with John Howlett, Bobby then started his regular routine. Every morning had a start time of 0500. He would "unload bluebirds and spread the mail" which had been trucked to Stockdale.

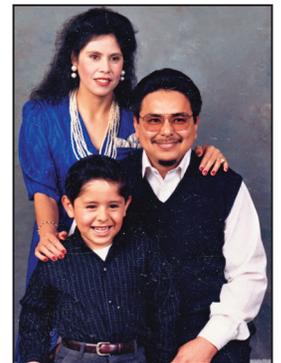
He then went over to Auxiliary Route 929. This assignment took about two hours to case and required about three hours of delivery time. (Bobby is quick to add that there was no DPS at that time. "We cased every single letter ourselves!") Due to the growth in Southwest Bakersfield, Walt Hamm added even more territory. This increased casing time and, initially, led to at least six hours on the street. Walt kept growing that auxiliary until Bobby was giving away four hour swings.

When he absolutely had to, Walt finally put the really big auxiliary up for bid as a regular route. Although 929 was curbside, other options were easier and no one bid on it. Bobby did. He then had a case that he could call "home"!

Bobby stayed on that route until about three years ago. With some thirty-five years under his belt, knee problems had become an issue and (because he hoped to hit *at least* 42 years as a Letter Carrier) he bid to a new assignment: Route 902.

Well before that, something else happened that shaped the course of his life...

Some time in the mid-1980s, a new "casual employee" walked through the doors at Stockdale. Her name was Hope. She liked the work, took "The Test", passed and walked through the next day as a PTF. Bobby thought, "She was more than cute. She was



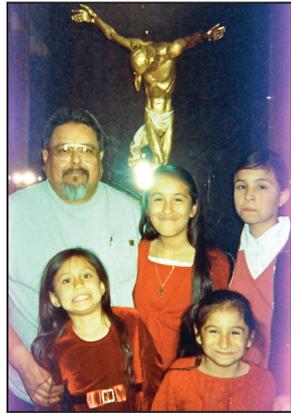
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A WORKER.” They were married July 4, 1987 and it was the start of an amazing adventure!

When Hope made Regular, she was sent Down Town as an annex truck driver. She and Bobby developed a new routine where they would no longer walk up the same back dock to go to work every day. And, like many other Letter Carrier couples all over the



United States, they made it work.



For Bobby — as well as for Hope — Family and Faith are central to the type of people they are and the choices they’ve made in life.

Having the insights developed over the course of a federal career which spanned over forty years, Bobby does have some perspective to offer those who have not retired.



“I see that the Post Office is really changing. They have to in order to survive. But, I don’t think that all of the changes are good. Management really gets after Carriers for any small mistakes. Well, people do make mistakes. It’s not like they intend to. There are so many things to deal with all of the time. The increased volume of parcels has added a whole different dimension to the job. The use of scanners has made what we do more demanding. However, one of the most difficult things to deal with is the use of new supervisors who have a minimum of time doing the job. They tell senior employees how to do their job — having no idea of what it entails to do it day after day and year after year...”

As he rides off into a new phase of his life, Bobby does share one thing that he is very, very concerned about: **Postal vehicles.**

“I kept telling management about a problem my LLV was having.

My vehicle would just die but then I would get it running again. Management said they couldn’t do anything about it until there was an actual breakdown. Well one day, on Stockdale Highway, I knew that it was going to die. I was able to pull off the busy roadway before I was in an accident. Turned out that it was a distributor cap issue. My LLV died five times in two months. To fix ‘my’ problem, they had me bring the vehicle back to the station to get a new one. Then? *They gave my vehicle — and its problems — to someone else to use.* Didn’t make any kind of sense to me!”

When he walked in the door at Stockdale all those many years ago, he had no idea that his entire career would be as a 93309 Letter Carrier. He just knew that he would work hard. “For me, the job was easy. Some people are good at math. Others are good at English. I was good at being a Letter Carrier. Some people struggle at this job. I just knew what I had to do and did it.”

Bobby’s professional attention to detail and diligence were recognized by other Carriers. And, over the years, he was awarded four Incentive Awards initiated by four different managers .



He knows that he is going to miss all of the people he worked with. He was at 5601 Stockdale Highway for all of the many



years he carried mail. Asked to share a “word of advice” for friends still working, Bobby’s word was: **PERSEVERE!**

Pictures supplied by the Cruz family and Anita Holderman

Why would anyone ever want to retire???

Out there

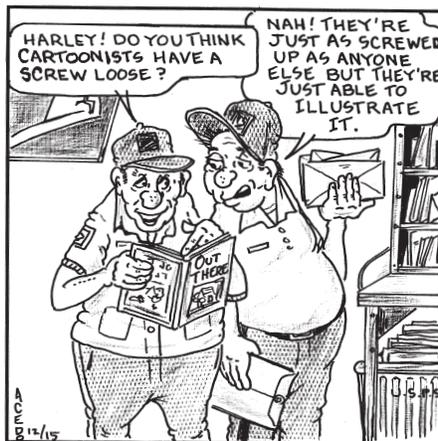
"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



OUT THERE



"Out there"



OUT THERE



Enjoy this "Six Pack" from Fred Acedo — Branch 782 S.A.N.E.!!

S.A.N.E. ~ Special Assistant Newsletter Editor

Originally published in the NALC Branch 782 January 2016 E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE

YOU have the responsibility to provide for YOUR future! Your retirement doesn't start when you get to that Last Punch/Swipe.

— TSP sermon —

It's actually pretty simple: "Save MORE than you can 'afford' to save!" Really. Read again! Repeat!!! **Take action!!!**

Wealth isn't based not on how much you "put away". The key is **HOW LONG YOU PUT IT AWAY!!!** Too subtle?

Here is the message: Save as much as you can for retirement one payday at a time. TSP is a great retirement option for you...

Don't ever say, "Nobody ever told me that I shouldn't miss out on the 'free money' the USPS will give me to use the TSP."

April 30, 2019 was quite a day for Darlene Dorsey

For Letter Carriers, seniority dates are pretty important. They frame where you are in “the pecking order” for vacation time and bidding.

Generally, they also indicate when a person’s postal career began. More importantly, in a perfect world, it is also a marker on when one will become eligible to retire.

The Bakersfield seniority list cites Darlene Dorsey’s start date as September 4, 1993. However, possibly an unknown fact to her fellow co-workers was that Darlene’s career actually started on July 21, 1984 in northern California in Saratoga.



“Captured at work!”

Darlene’s family moved from San Francisco to San Jose when she was nine years old. A neighbor was a Letter Carrier and she remembers hearing a lot of dog stories from him.

As she grew up she went through the school system and became a college student. She even took “The Test” for a postal job when she was 18 or 19 years old — despite having reservations about having to possibly deal with dog attacks. However, she never heard back and just went about her life.

It was while she was managing a pizza restaurant in San Jose that a Letter Carrier named Terry used to come in for lunch. By that time, she was really burned out with going to school while working. Darlene mentioned to him that, although she was making enough money as a manager, she would really like to earn more doing something else. Terry mentioned that he’d heard that the Post Office was hiring. This was after he’d shared dog stories of his own...

A friend of hers named Mark became a Letter Carrier. Despite also hearing about incidents with dogs from him, Darlene decided

“OuT tHeRe”



to take another shot at being hired by the USPS.

Why? There was a very specific reason.

Doing a little more about the advantages presented by a possible career with the Postal Service revealed that — not only were there long-

term benefits — she could double her salary! Seemed like a no-brainer to her.

About six months later, she got an offer to work in Saratoga. Remembering the stories she’d heard from her former neighbor, as well as from Terry and Mark about all of the dogs in San Jose, Darlene was relieved. She’d concluded that San Jose must be unique in that it had ALL of the dog problems and *she wasn’t about to go there!!*

This impression was soon bolstered when Darlene found herself at a San Jose station out on the street during the initial training. She and a group of five newbies were with an instructor in a residential neighborhood when it seemed like a dog was going to rip off the garage door to get at them. (Her conclusion was that dogs were a part of the world that just San Jose Letter Carriers dealt with. *Little did she know...*)

After completing the initial orientation, she arrived at the one unit in Saratoga. The majority of the city routes were all mounted

“OuT tHeRe”

while the downtown deliveries were dismount. There were no NBU’s at that time.

Although close to San Jose, she was unfamiliar with the city of Saratoga. She had no reference points about which neighborhoods were where or traffic patterns she would have to deal with. There was no OJI in the city, but she acclimated pretty quickly. She had to!



The biggest comfort when she was dealing with confusion and trying to figure out what she was doing came from her fellow Carriers. The camaraderie was amazing! She would be feeling overwhelmed because she was running so late and help would arrive to bail her out. In time, she was doing the same for others.

Citing the fact that our Letter Carrier world has changed, Darlene shares this about the environment at that time, “Everybody in Saratoga worked together to get the mail delivered as quickly as possible. Although the days were challenging, working together made everything more fun. We worked hard and we became

OUT THERE



Originally published January 2007

OUT THERE



Originally published October 2014

almost a family! We used to gather as a group for lunch — especially on Saturdays. We liked being around each other.”

As she transitioned from being a newbie, she learned some of the “tricks of the trade”. Writing the letter “P” on a letter and then turning it became a reminder that she had a parcel to deliver at a certain address. And, over the course of the next eight years, she became proficient in her chosen profession and her life had taken on a comfortable routine.

One day, when visiting her sister in Kern County, she went to a Sunday service. In that church, she found “food for her soul!” Based on that experience, she decided that she was going to try to transfer. Taft had an opening. For a variety of reasons, it wasn’t a good fit. *But, she still really wanted to move closer to the church.*

She later re-contacted the Taft postmaster, Bill Holland. He put her in touch with Bill McCoy in Bakersfield. He interviewed her and offered a Letter Carrier position. When it was a suitable time to leave her old job, she reported to South Station ready to work.

At the time, the 1100s and 1300s worked out of that building and she was assigned to Route 1106 when the Regular, Sybil Wilkerson (who was also a reserve Sheriff), was away from her job working security at the Kern County Fair. Darlene did swings in the 04s as well as the 11s and 13s and she was on 416 for a while

Darlene bid Route 433 when Frank Diaz retired and carried that assignment until 2007. The customers she “inherited” from Frank had loved him and she was the recipient of the good will he had sown. One day she experienced an inordinately large mail volume. She hadn’t had a chance to take lunch. Maxine, a customer at 4401 Hughes Lane (a large trailer park), noticed that Darlene was running late and asked her what was going on.

As she explained to the customer what had happened, Darlene mentioned that she really wished that she’d been able to have a little food that day because she was feeling pretty hungry. The next day, Maxine had lunch waiting for her when she drove up to the mailbox! *That is a good memory!!*

During the course of delivering, her feet were feeling the strain and she was dealing with a variety of ailments. She knew it was

probably time for a move. She bid Route 1111 — an MBU assignment. The Carriers in that zone had moved out of South Station and so she worked out of a new building at Camino Media.

Her assignment was a monster! There was a tremendous amount of new construction going out in the southwest part of Bakersfield and the size of the routes seemed to keep exploding every single day.

DARLENE HAD TO GIVE AWAY THREE HOURS A DAY JUST TO GET DONE IN TEN HOURS! But, she hung in there and

adjustments eventually made the route a more reasonable task for her to accomplish on a daily basis.

Retirement is presenting some exciting new adventures. She is going to be remarried soon. Because her fiancée lives in Santa Maria, she has relocated to be closer to him. She admits that she hasn’t acclimated yet and has stashed sweaters and jackets in various locations because it still seems pretty cold to her.

More travel is on her horizon with a honeymoon in the Florida Keys. Although foreign travel isn’t something that is on his agenda, there is a whole lot of the United States that they want to explore together. They look forward to seeing Niagra Falls from the Canadian side. And then, there is the Grand Canyon, too!

Other opportunities await her. She is just six classes shy of completing her Accounting Degree. Already registered for classes, she is looking forward to getting back into the swing of academic life.

Usually, she is quick to smile. But, Darlene admits that the way that she was treated by management when she was dealing with the job-related injuries in recent years was difficult to handle.

She prayed a lot. Her faith did sustain her and she is looking forward to living in a world which is more gentle and caring!

“Lastly, I loved my job delivering the mail. I met a lot of wonderful people with the Service and customers, too! If I had to do it all over again, I would...minus the injuries...lol. Working for the Postal Service was a wonderful experience.”



Originally published August 2003

There IS Life after Retirement!!

Since the day Joe Lavoie retired in 2019 on January 3, his life has been busy!

Framed by a to-do list he put together in anticipation of having more time for projects, each of his days start out as early as 05:30.

There is a routine to his life which no longer includes putting on his Letter Carrier uniform. He starts out by taking the dogs out to do their business. It is followed by picking up his newspaper, going out to the garage to refill any needed supplies, breakfast for him and the dogs and then letting the dogs back out. He then checks out articles in the paper, reads any e-mails and uses the time on the computer to do research about any number of topics that he is curious about. Many of his interests are based on numerous groups in which he is active (National Rifle Association, Oath Keepers, American Legion, etc.)

He spends a lot of time going through info on one website: PostalNews.Com. It is an aggregate source for discussion about many issues. **(Editor-guy note:** Joe has provided a number of print-outs to me. Some have been shared during Branch 782 meetings. As a teaser, there may even be some published in this month's web version. I'll see how it works out.)

Although he admits that he does like to eat, he noticed that retired life had led to more than a little bit of weight gain. (For anyone who might have discovered that the pounds *do* creep up on you as you age, he recommends "intermittent fasting". It is working for him.)

Speaking about food, once or twice a month he has breakfast with John Hardin at Dennys and catches up on what is going



Joining the "Last Punch Bunch"

on at Stockdale Station and learns about what changes are being made.

There is a story as to how he started out his career. After being discharged from the military, Joe left his life-long home in Maine to look for some of his Army buddies. He hitchhiked (with his sister's then-boyfriend) through much of the central U.S. It was a great adventure!

Although they never did find one guy who was supposed to be at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, they had a great time crashing in one of the dorm rooms and were glad to get enough food eating with students in the cafeteria.

In September 1972 (with a desire whetted by that travel experience), he made his way to Bakersfield looking to meet up with another old Army buddy he'd known in Germany.

(Some of you old timers may remember "Crazy Joe" Perich. He was a clerk who worked at various units in town and died on his way home from work from the GMF. *He* was the "the old army buddy".)

Joe Lavoie came to the realization that the cold winters in Maine had lost some of their appeal. California (Bakersfield in particular) had pretty warm conditions...

Eventually, he was hired as a Mail Handler in February 1981 and worked at the Annex on California Avenue until May 1, 1982 when he became a Letter Carrier. He was assigned for three months to Hillcrest as a PTF. Ray Pettus was his OJI and he taught Joe how to carry mail

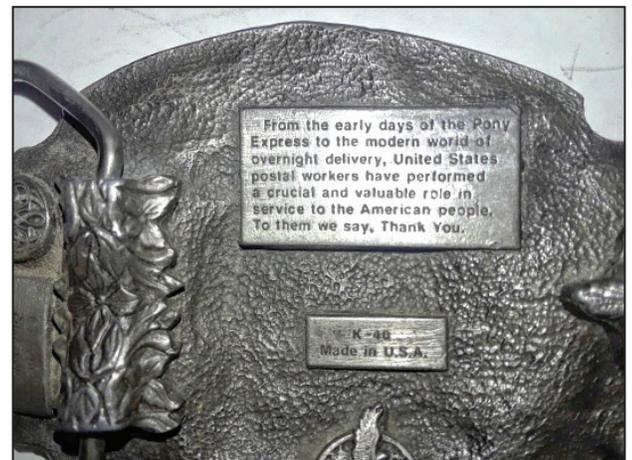
Although there is no specific recollection if this came about by his experience with Ray, Joe shared that he *NEVER* carried mail on his arm. He *always* worked out of the satchel.

In speaking about that early part of his career, he recalls a number of people at Hillcrest: Fred Acedo was "a character". John Wonderly was still working as a Letter Carrier at that time and — for some reason — Joe also remembers *him*...

After passing probation, he was sent to Stockdale Station. He was John Howlett's T-6 for a time and shared that John was a hard guy to get to know. Eventually, he and John became really good friends.

The topic of friends led to Joe describing one treasured item that he wore daily at work — a pewter belt buckle which had an inscription and artwork on the back that was never seen by most people.

It is a pretty cool item.



The belt buckle was a gift given to him by another of his friends: Tina Harbour. The buckle is something that he treasures as a memento of his many days as a dedicated Stockdale Letter Carrier.

Joe chuckled as he recalled Supervisor Modesto Flores taking him case to case and introducing him on that *first* day in the 09s. When he got to Maureen Buscher-Dang, Modesto pronounced that she was "The Blonde Bombshell". She probably has no recollection of this. He sure does!

As the title of this article implies, "There *IS* Life after Retirement!!" It is almost dizzying to hear about his varied activi-

ties; however, there is no denying how passionate he is about issues with which he is concerned, organizations he belongs to, and some activities with which many others may not be familiar!

Joe is an amateur ham radio operator. Through training and upgrades, he has progressed through successive levels and brings a lot of knowledge to bear.



He is still fascinated by the way that a signal bounced to and from Israel or Brazil has allowed him to hold conversations in the 100 watt setup limited bandwidth that the FCC allows. More importantly from Joe's standpoint: The use of this media is "insurance" in the event that other communication methods are disrupted (cell phones, the web, etc.). He feels that it's just a matter of time until ham radios will have to be a stopgap.

One thing that he really enjoyed about the Postal Service was how many Veterans were employed. Whether Clerks, Mailhandlers, Carriers or Supervisors, the shared military experience was a firm base upon which to build friendships.

The Army denotes possible job careers as Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). Joe's designation was MOS 764Y30.

In that field, he enjoyed working on and becoming familiar and expert with numerous weapons systems in use by the military in that era. It is quite an impressive array: the 1911 .45 caliber handgun, the M-79 grenade launcher, the M-60 machine gun, the M-14 rifle, the M-16 and the M-2 .50 caliber machine gun as well as other items including gas masks.

He has built on this knowledge base and is an avid gun enthusiast who goes target shooting out at "5 Dogs" and at Second

Amendment Sports. He taught his daughter how to shoot and acknowledges that she is a pretty good shot!

Additionally, he joined the American Legion about four or five years ago. Like many other returning Veterans, he always thought that the organization was just for old timers. (Well, if you live long enough, guess what happens...)

He is considering become active in Post 26 which is headquartered in downtown Bakersfield. He went to a breakfast there a few years ago and enjoyed the discussions and the camaraderie. One WWII Veteran shared fascinating stories about wartime Washington, DC where he was stationed in the 1940s.

Joe has always been a parent who is active in supporting his daughter in whatever she has shown interest in. She was in dance class when she was young. When she was in high school, there was a desire/need for someone to volunteer to videotape the West High color guard routines.

Despite his Army background ("Don't volunteer for nothin'!"), Joe added that to his daily routine.

Having researched how to create a website (at a time when coding was required) he launched one as a platform to share with other parents. TaeKwonDo added another level to what Joe would do with his grandsons during those hours after working his assigned routes.

Joe was working as a T-6 for folks like John Howlett and L.C. Webb and enjoyed what he was doing. In 1983, Route 923 (an all-walking route) went up for bid.

When Joe bid and won the opportunity to deliver that assignment — with very minimal seniority and about a year on the job — he was floored. He figures that nobody wanted it because they didn't want to walk all day. He didn't mind it at all.

Although it is still an all walking route, his predecessor (Richard Rodriguez) had the assignment set up as a "walk out". There was no vehicle and mail from staged in relay boxes.

Joe was eventually provided a series of delivery vehicles through his 37 years that he used for park-and-loop (red Chevy Chevette, U.S. Forest Service passenger van, a blue jeep, a white jeep, a K-Car, a Ford Windstar, Dodge Caravan, an LLV and, finally, a Pro-Master.)

When one is on an assignment for as long as Joe was, there is a possibility that you will get to know many of your customers. When you have a walking route, many of them become more than just acquaintances. Through those short interactions when you hand them their mail or walk up to the house and see them doing their normal activities, friendships are developed. You get to know them, their neighbors, children and dogs, etc. You are *their* Carrier!

Joe's first delivery at 5917 Hartman served as a springboard to see so many people on a daily basis. Life was good.

Following his retirement, Joe exercises. But, his routine takes him back to friends he has made through the years. **Joe still walks his route!** He still sees Mrs. Walker or Becky Powell and others. Life is good.

Although there are many other activities that fill his retirement, it is important to him that those relationships that he established be a continued part of his life.

Like everybody else who retires, he did it one day at a time. From that first moment when he walked into the station (and found himself dealing with people like Cliff Fehdrau, George Perez, Rudy Aros, Lupe Arredondo, Henry Garcia, Elaine Harbour and others like Alex Dang, Teddy Martinez, Lou Garvin, and "Gordo" Alvarez) it was a, daily process until he found himself being "one of the old-timers" to the new folks as they landed on that back dock hoping to keep the job.

He hopes that new employees understand the importance for retirement planning — even when the concept appears unattainable and unrealistic. "It happens sooner than you realize!"

It is an interesting observation to note that while much has been covered in this feature about where he is in retirement, he's only just begun... Yes. Life *IS* good.

“Street Lamp to Street Lamp”

I sat down at this very keyboard a year ago and started writing an article for this newsletter. It was intended to be a SIMPLE story of how I was trying to cope until retirement.

But, something strange happened. A life lesson, sparked by the death of a severely missed special family member, inspired me; and, sharing its effect on me became very cathartic. It was never intended as such.



[Our very thorough and dedicated newsletter editor showed my writing to several of his contacts and I know that the article was reprinted, nationwide, in at least eight other newsletters. I also received several pats on the back from co-workers, friends and family. However, the ultimate compliment was from “Jen’s” Mother. She is now a retired teacher of English. She gave me nothing but praise about the article. I ostensibly sent the corrected draft to her for permission to have it published. Truthfully, I sent it to her because I didn’t want it to come back to me with more red ink on it than the black that was used to print the piece! Remember? **She was an English Teacher!** More importantly, she has been such an amazing treasure to me!]

If you haven’t read my message — and in some way I have piqued your curiosity — you can find what I wrote on the next page of this newsletter.

So here is my update. (This will stick closer to my original plan before last year’s article took on a life of its own.)

Today, I am tired. My body hurts. And, I just simply don’t want to do “this” anymore. But, the main reason I haven’t retired yet is because no one has yet to step up to support me in a manner to which I have become accustomed! I keep getting paid for working; so, I still work every single day that I am scheduled.

MY THREE-YEAR PLAN (now 2 years down and one year to go): Will I achieve my goal of reaching either March 27th or July 31st 2020? I honestly don’t know. I STILL keep written motivations in my LLV to remind me why I show up every morning.

Mainly, my focus is two-fold: **1)** “Can I survive *another* summer in the take-your-breath-away Bakersfield heat?” And: **2)** “Can I physically last as long as I want so I can achieve the financial goals I have set to put my wonderful wife and me into a better position financially?”

Unfortunately, I am beginning to feel my age. I can no longer come home from work and mow the lawns. I can’t come home from work and do a project in the garage. I can’t come home from work and fix a leaking faucet. I **CAN** come home from work and shower, sit and have dinner and watch a game or tv show that my wife and I enjoy together.

Right now, it seems The Heat will be my biggest challenge! The problem is that, as I have aged, I have become less tolerant of that heat. It seems that I go to work tired.

So, I guess my next challenge after the endurance that it takes to get through the triple-digit days of Summer is that we seem to go right into the volume that is the Christmas season once October 1st is here. There really is *no* break.

Once again, my motivation to get through the Christmas season is the almighty dollar. Days are long. We work into the dark of night. Overtime will be plenty. And, when we see our paychecks we will be motivated to go on — *at least for two more weeks.*

FOR ME, TWO WEEKS AT A TIME FOR OVER 34 YEARS. However, despite this monetary motivation, I know I am close to retiring.

Change has always been a problem for me. (I am of German heritage and we are an extremely regimented people. The person I most respect ((Jen’s Father) observed that, “If there is a man out in the pouring rain at 2:00 a.m. waiting to cross the street because the light hasn’t changed to green yet, you can bet he is German.”)

I keep on reminding my supervisors all the time that when they change the flow chart it really messes up my routine. **All the changes that keep happening at work seem to be more and more annoying to me.** It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to just shake my head and let it go...

Perhaps, the topic of changes is best suited for my final update as I will no longer have to deal with them.

I would like to praise all union officers, shop stewards, and all those who keep the union going! They basically work a second job after they spend all day delivering their routes and providing great service to their customers! I often find that it is a huge effort for me just to attend the monthly union meetings after work. **SO, THANK YOU ALL!!!**

In the meantime, I will continue to try to find motivations to get me to where I want to be. I **WILL** go over my retirement figures and future budgets countless times before my last day. I am only going to get one chance of getting my decision right and I have promised myself that my planning **WILL** be thorough! (Remember: “Regimented German”. Planning is a big part of who I am.)

I think we all need to find what motivates us to get us through any career. Mine are money and comfort and days off, trips to see the kids and grandkids, golf outings with my wife and friends, baseball, and a passion for sports in general.

The road to my goal is — **“Street Lamp To Street Lamp.”**

Looking forward to Retirement!!

RALPH MOELLER

For now, still a 93308 Letter Carrier

In loving memory of Jen

By Ralph Moeller, 93308 Carrier
NALC Branch 782

I think that the most valuable thing we have is time. You can't replace it. You can't purchase more — what you have is what you have — and then time is gone. That's it.

My thirty-third year of service started in March and I wonder, "Where did the time go?" Of course, now that I am planning retirement, time seems to have come to a significant slow down.

The person that I respect more than anyone I know is a cousin. I asked for his opinion about my retirement plans. I gave him my numbers and my outlook. I told him I could go right now; but, if I "soldier on", the amount I get will be a bit better.

What he told me is not what I wanted to hear. But, it's what I already knew deep down inside. He said, "Another three years will make a better 20."

This question was asked a year ago. So, one down. Two to go. Unfortunately for me, I am having a really hard time with the remainder of this three-year plan.

In my LLV, I have posted some inspiration. A list of fun things coming up that my wife and I are looking forward to in the next two years. Examples would be where our next golf round will be played, our plans for my next long weekend and the like.

This has worked for me for a while. But, lately, I have felt like just steering the LLV back towards Dole Court, handing supervision the keys and telling them, "I'm done!" This would not be my brightest moment of thought, but it is a thought that *IS* occurring with more frequency.

I need more inspiration.

Life keeps giving me lessons. I found my inspiration last weekend in a very memorable way.

We spent the weekend at my aforementioned cousin's house watching his grandson play in his championship Pony League baseball game. That night I was in bed checking out Facebook and I got the motivation I was needing.

My cousin lost his daughter, Jennifer, to cancer last October. She passed the morning of what was to be game two of the World Series between the Dodgers and the Astros.

Those of you that know me know I am a big baseball fan. More specifically, I am a big Dodger fan! I mention the event because "Jen" (how she was and is affectionately referred to) was also a HUGE Dodger fan. I can't help but think that she would have loved the rest of the Series.

Jen was a teacher of English at Santa Monica High School. However, she was much more than that! Her contributions to education and her students is a list so long I don't even try to display it for anybody. She was loved by every student that ever took her class. She was adored by her fellow faculty and respected by the administration.

To this day, people get on Facebook to tell stories of how she changed their lives or how — even recently — she has even now helped them through her life.

She touched *me* this past weekend.

I happened upon something that she had published in *This I Believe, Inc.* Her story is titled "**Street Lamp to Street Lamp**". It is an account of how she was trying to get into better physical shape to have a family with her husband.

Unfortunately, she didn't like working out. She found new and innovative ways to avoid the gym because, well, it just isn't fun.

She started walking one day. Then she challenged herself to run to the next street lamp and then to the next one and so on. At the end of summer she was running five miles a day all from that first tiny goal which she set for herself.

People fail at goals because they put unrealistic expectations on themselves. That's what I believe. So, my new motivation is not 24 more months, or 52 more pay periods, or even 104 weeks. Instead, my new motivation and goal for getting through the next two years is *street lamp to street lamp*. "I can deliver to all these addresses to the next street lamp." When I get there, I will deliver all the addresses to the next street lamp.



I share this with you hoping it is a message you will all understand. I hope it will help a few of my fellow Letter Carriers get through whatever it is they need to get through, or at least make that task seem not so overwhelming.

As I continue *street lamp to street lamp*, written on every one of them in my mind is the name "Jen".

FYI, the second to the last street on my route is Jennifer Street...

No lie.

Know "The Rules". Follow them.

A few months ago, I had to inform a fellow Carrier (a union Brother/Sister) that, "You will no longer have a job with the United States Postal Service." — a job this Carrier had performed for nearly two decades...

Frankly, I'd prefer to never have to give this news to another Carrier again! But, unfortunately that's not reality. Because, the truth is: **"Management WILL FIRE (AKA "REMOVE") Carriers for numerous reasons."**

When I explain to my co-workers the reality of what Carriers are receiving discipline for, I frequently get the impression that most Carriers believe it won't happen to them. *And, I get it.*

How could management discipline you for trying to go faster? Right?? I mean, if you're estimating to be back by 5 p.m. but your supervisor is asking you to make it by 4:30 p.m., then why would they discipline you for something like not curbing your wheels on flat surfaces, or not wearing your shoulder belt harness when you are still wearing your lap belt? *After all, you're just trying to do is make it back by the time management asked you to.*

But management DOES discipline you for these practices — AND MANY MORE — even if management has pressured you to make it back sooner than your estimation.

A Carrier received discipline for walking on a wet uneven stone path that was used during several 3999s. (But, it was not "unsafe" until there was a twisted ankle.) Management tried to argue that the Carrier should not have walked there because it was wet, that the path had wet leaves on it, and that the stepping stones were not completely flush with the ground.

None of this was a problem before. Why? Because it is the shortest path thru the yard!

And what about the wet path and leaves? It rained that morning! So when I asked my management counterpart, "If we (Carriers) cannot walk on wet surfaces, then what are we supposed to do when it rains? Stay still?" Was the Carrier supposed to not walk on the wet stones but walk on the wet pavement which also had wet leaves on it.

A Carrier was walking around a hedge that was overgrowing onto the sidewalk and stepped onto the grass but didn't know there was a hole covered by the grass. The Carrier twisted an ankle. Management issued discipline to that person for working in an unsafe manner and cited that this Carrier failed to notify management of the unsafe situation caused by the overgrown hedge.

It was implied that the Carrier was not watching where they were walking. So what was this Carrier supposed to do? Hold the mail for the block? Use X-ray vision and see the hole under the grass?

Another Carrier was disciplined for having their right arm leaning on the window ledge when driving down the street in an LLV. Management felt his was unsafe because the Carrier did not have both hands on the steering wheel.

You're supposed to remember all that training you had when you were first hired all those years ago. *Did you know that?*

Management uses your signature on those training materials to justify discipline. Management contends that since you signed or initialled any training from years ago, that this is an admission that you knowingly broke a rule — no matter how long it's been.

How many times have we heard different instructions from different supervisors on curbing your wheels? But management cites all that training that the Carrier had all those years ago when the Carrier was first hired or those morning huddles when you sometimes can't even hear what is being said over the parcel machine blurring out random addresses.

When Carriers ask management to clarify when a Carrier has to curb their wheels, they say, "We'll get back to you." But, you know what that means...

Did you know that Carriers are receiving discipline for missing scans?

Or mail samplings? SMPs are the new flavor of the month". Even though the SMP will alert at the wrong address? Yes.

What about if you give a swing away? Did you know that if two scanners are logged into the same route that they both will ask for the SMP from the same address? Or, what if the person on the swing ignores the SMP, does the Regular get a missed SMP?

And of course there is discipline for irregular attendance.

You can't forget about the discipline you can get for using the leave that you earn as a benefit. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, management does not care what your circumstances are. If you are taking unprotected unscheduled absences, you can and most likely will receive discipline.

Did you know that if you call in sick each day for three consecutive days, management will count them as three separate incidents. But if you call in once for the same three days, it will be recorded as one incident?

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN? WHY IS THIS ARTICLE WRITTEN?

All Carriers need to be informed on what "The Rules" are and to follow them — **NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES.**

It means that **ALL** Carriers need to know their rights.

It means that management **FIRES** employees.

And it means that if Carriers do not know "The Rules" or their Rights, it will be that much easier for management to **FIRE** them.

So look over the attached PS Form 4584 "Observation of Driving Practices" and PS Form 4588 "Observation of Work Practices-Delivery Services".

If there is an item on there you don't understand, ask a Shop Steward to explain it to you. Do **EVERY** item listed on both PS Forms 4584 & 4588. Make it a habit.

If management implies that you do not have to follow certain rules in order to go “faster”, insist that they put it writing and notify a Shop Steward.

Take the time to be SAFE. It is our job to be SAFE and efficient — not fast and unsafe.

I had a Carrier try to poke fun at me for getting my route cut four years ago. This same Carrier was twice caught throwing good mail into the UBBM waste.

The only contractual work/time standard is the Work And/ Or Time Standards in the National Agreement. Article 34, section A states “...the principle of a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay is recognized by all parties to this Agreement”. **BE SAFE AND BE FAIR.**

Work at a pace that allows you to be safe. During a 3999, a supervisor once asked me if I always drove this slowly. My response, “You mean safe? Yes, I always drive this safe!”

AGAIN BE SAFE AND FAIR.

An employee was FIRED for not curbing wheels on flat surfaces. I had a conversation with a Carrier from the same station and explained that they needed to curb their wheels, “I don’t have time to curb the wheels. It would take too long.”

SEE THE PROBLEM?

One last note that Carriers need to be aware of: Handbook M-39 Section 134 Street Management, 134.2 Techniques, 134.21 states that the manager must maintain an objective attitude in conducting street supervision and discharge this duty in an open and above board manner.

Section 134.22 goes on to say that **THE MANAGER IS NOT TO SPY OR USE OTHER COVERT TECHNIQUES.** (emphasis added)

Have you ever driven by a supervisor crouching down in their vehicles so you won’t see them? That’s NOT allowed.

There is a current member of management who likes to park on the side streets to watch Carriers, and who will then travel the long way around to the next intersection so the Carrier will not see them. If you see a supervisor hiding, notify your Shop Steward.

And, if you are being “observed”, which is basically anything longer than a supervisor driving by, management is supposed to give you your copy of the PS Form 4584 by the end of the day and no later than the next day. Notify your Shop Steward if you don’t get your copy.

It is important that ALL Carriers donate to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Protect all of our jobs and our retirements. If you wait till we lose it, its too late. Donate NOW!

Someone on the internet shared this point of view: “Union membership is like a gym membership. Dues are necessary to operate. And — just like a gym — if you don’t show up and participate, you do not become stronger.”

PAUL SALAZAR
93305 Shop Steward



Observation of Driving Practices

Instructions

This form, when used correctly, can aid in the elimination of driving practices which cause accidents. All driving practices needing improvement and noted below should be discussed with the driver as soon as possible after the observation. Because the primary purpose of conducting observations is to improve driving practices before they result in accidents, discussions with drivers must be positive in nature and include the benefits to be gained from improving driving practices. If a driving observation is determined to require official action, such action will be in accordance with the terms of the National Agreements. To enforce a high standard of professional driving performance, all drivers must be observed at least twice a year, and at other times when appropriate. For probationary drivers this form must be completed at 30-, 60-, and 90-day intervals (or at other appropriate intervals if the driver's probationary period is not 90 days), and a copy attached to Form 1750, Employee Probationary Period Evaluation Report.

Name of Driver and Employee ID Number	Time of Observation From To	Date of Observation
Location of Observation	Vehicle Type	Vehicle No.
		Sta/Br/Otc

A. Professional Driving Practices Demonstrated

During this observation, the driver exhibited safe and professional driving practices, and is to be commended.

B. Driving Practices to Be Improved

STARTING <input type="checkbox"/> Fasten seat belt and/or close door <input type="checkbox"/> Give proper signal when leaving curb <input type="checkbox"/> Look back to check traffic <input type="checkbox"/> Wait for suitable gap in traffic STEERING AND LANE USAGE <input type="checkbox"/> Keep both hands on wheel <input type="checkbox"/> Keep vehicle in center of lane <input type="checkbox"/> Stay to right of center line <input type="checkbox"/> Stay in one lane as much as possible LANE CHANGING <input type="checkbox"/> Check for vehicles approaching in intended lane <input type="checkbox"/> Signal lane change <input type="checkbox"/> Change lane so as not to be in another driver's blind spot SPEED AND FOLLOWING DISTANCE <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain speed of traffic flow not to exceed posted speed <input type="checkbox"/> Adhere to posted speeds in curves <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain 2-second following distance <input type="checkbox"/> Slow down or change lanes when tallgated RESPONSIVENESS TO WEATHER <input type="checkbox"/> Increase following distance to 3 seconds <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce speed well in advance of intersections <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce speed overall during adverse weather conditions	HIGHWAY/FREEWAY <input type="checkbox"/> Enter at speed of traffic flow <input type="checkbox"/> Signal prior to merging <input type="checkbox"/> Select entry gap which minimizes interference with others <input type="checkbox"/> Periodically observe vehicles in adjacent lanes <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently check rear/side mirrors <input type="checkbox"/> Signal exit intentions well in advance <input type="checkbox"/> Exit at posted speed PASSING <input type="checkbox"/> Allow sufficient space in which to pass <input type="checkbox"/> Signal to pull out or back in <input type="checkbox"/> Pass where legal (not on hills, curves, intersections, no passing zones) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide 2 seconds following distance to vehicle being passed before pulling back in STOPPING AND INTERSECTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce speed at uncontrolled or vision-obstructed intersections <input type="checkbox"/> Observe traffic controls <input type="checkbox"/> Decelerate gradually when stopping <input type="checkbox"/> Check mirror for following traffic <input type="checkbox"/> Tap brake or give hand signal if being followed too closely <input type="checkbox"/> Stop before crosswalk or line <input type="checkbox"/> Look left, right, and left <input type="checkbox"/> Yield to cross traffic	TURNING <input type="checkbox"/> Approach in proper lane <input type="checkbox"/> Signal at least 100 feet in advance <input type="checkbox"/> Turn into proper lane PARKING <input type="checkbox"/> Signal Intentions <input type="checkbox"/> Curb wheels <input type="checkbox"/> Set parkgear and handbrake <input type="checkbox"/> Turn off ignition <input type="checkbox"/> Lock vehicle BACKING <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid backing whenever possible <input type="checkbox"/> Look behind vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Physically turn around while backing <input type="checkbox"/> Back slowly ATTENTION TO PEDESTRIANS <input type="checkbox"/> Yield right-of-way at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce speed when pedestrian approaches roadway <input type="checkbox"/> Tap horn to alert bicyclist, occupant in parked vehicle, or pedestrian near roadway <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce speed when children observed near schools, parks, or residential areas
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Comments

Title of Observer Signature

C. To Be Completed By Driver's Immediate Supervisor

Action Taken	Original 1 — PEDC Manager 2 — To Driver 3 — To Driver's Immediate Supervisor 4 — To Local Safety Manager (If a probationary driver, attach to Form 1750 and forward to the designated postal official instead of the safety manager.)
Signature	Date

PS Form 4584, August 1984



Observation of Work Practices - Delivery Services

Employee Classification based on duration of Postal Employment

(Check one box)
 1. Non-Career 2. 0-3 months (probationary) 3. 4-23 months 4. 2 years plus

Name of Employee	Sta/Br/Otc	Date of Observation
Location of Observation	Task Observed	Time of Observation From: To:

Observer: During the course of this observation you are to mark (✓) which activities observed, (○) if Yes, (□) if No. The observation is to be reviewed with the employee immediately upon completion.

IN THE OFFICE & WHEN LOADING VEHICLE <input type="checkbox"/> S1 Avoids awkward positions or overextended reach <input type="checkbox"/> S2 Avoids holding too many letters/flats in hand <input type="checkbox"/> S3 Case area kept neat/orderly <input type="checkbox"/> S4 Stacks trays & tubs neatly <input type="checkbox"/> S5 Avoids loading hard plastic trays greater than 20 lbs. <input type="checkbox"/> S6 Secures parcels and heavy objects in vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> S7 Attaches keys to belt or clothing <input type="checkbox"/> S8 Pushes equipment rather than pulling it <input type="checkbox"/> S9 Keeps vehicle free of debris <input type="checkbox"/> S10 Performs vehicle inspection PERSONAL FACTORS <input type="checkbox"/> S11 Dresses in uniform, as applicable, suited for climate <input type="checkbox"/> S12 Follows headphone/cell phone policy (EL-801) <input type="checkbox"/> S13 Carries sufficient liquids during excessive heat SLIP/TRIP/FALL AVOIDANCE <input type="checkbox"/> S14 Wears proper footwear, in good condition <input type="checkbox"/> S15 Maintains a steady pace and does not run <input type="checkbox"/> S16 Is alert to changes in delivery area <input type="checkbox"/> S17 Avoids unsafe shortcuts <input type="checkbox"/> S18 Uses hand rails on stairs and ramps <input type="checkbox"/> S19 Watches where she/he is going <input type="checkbox"/> S20 Fingers mail only when safe to do so <input type="checkbox"/> S21 Reports route hazards, to supervisor (PS Form 1767 or other) <input type="checkbox"/> S22 Carries Hazard Warning cards with mail LIFTING PROCEDURES <input type="checkbox"/> S23 Lifts with legs, back straight <input type="checkbox"/> S24 Asks for assistance with heavy pieces <input type="checkbox"/> S25 Moves feet to avoid twisting when changing direction <input type="checkbox"/> S26 Avoids overloading satchel <input type="checkbox"/> S27 Transfers load safely in vehicle, uses mail hook, if available <input type="checkbox"/> S28 Loads/unloads mail into/from hampers safely CONDITION OF BOXES <input type="checkbox"/> S29 Reports NDCBU, collection boxes, relay boxes & parcel lockers that are in disrepair or not securely anchored <input type="checkbox"/> S30 Reports street/apartment mail boxes that are not in good repair or not securely anchored SECURITY, PARKED VEHICLE <input type="checkbox"/> S31 Closes and locks vehicle doors and windows <input type="checkbox"/> S32 Closes security door between cab and cargo bay	DOG BITE PREVENTION <input type="checkbox"/> S33 Cases Dog Warning cards with mail <input type="checkbox"/> S34 Wears satchel and has dog spray within reach and usable <input type="checkbox"/> S35 Rattles gate before entering an enclosed area <input type="checkbox"/> S36 Places foot at base of doors that open outwards to prevent dogs rushing out <input type="checkbox"/> S37 Withholds mail delivery when dog is loose <input type="checkbox"/> S38 Reports dog interference to supervisor ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> S39 Uses designated lunch and break locations, as applicable <input type="checkbox"/> S40 Uses designated park points <input type="checkbox"/> S41 Uses approved line of travel to, on, and from route <input type="checkbox"/> S42 Safe work practices were demonstrated SAFE WORK PRACTICE RECOGNITION <input type="checkbox"/> S43 Unsafe work practices, behaviors or acts were observed WORK PRACTICES TO BE IMPROVED Discussed with employee on: OBSERVER'S SIGNATURE/DATE Observer's Name: Observer's Signature: Date: Retention: 4 years
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PS Form 4588, July 2007

Original: Employee Copy: Supervisor

The death of anyone can be stressful. There are so many things that need to be addressed and so many different people who need to be informed. The following two pages offer guidance and also provide an opportunity for you to do some advance planning...

National Association
of Letter Carriers



When a retired letter carrier dies...

Step-by-step instructions for survivors to notify appropriate entities and apply for federal benefits such as survivor annuity, health and life insurance.

The NALC Retirement Department provides advice and assistance to retired and active members regarding retirement issues. This support does not end when an NALC member dies. Guidance to spouses and other survivors is also provided.

The steps to be taken when a retired Letter Carrier dies are as follows:

Notify the retired Letter Carrier's NALC branch.

If the retiree was a veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration at 800-827-1000.

Call the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213.

Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.).

If the retiree had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, call 202-638-4318 or write to MBA, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

If the retiree had health insurance through the NALC Health Benefit Plan or any other FEHB plan, the OPM will inform the health plan.

When a spouse is entitled to survivor benefits, he or she will continue to receive health insurance through the FEHB as long as he or she was covered under their spouse's FEHB plan at the time of death. The health plan will automatically change to self only and be switched to the surviving spouse's name.

If the retiree participated in the Thrift Savings Plan, contact the TSP at 877-968-3778.

Save this page with your important papers...

Source: NALC Website <https://www.nalc.org/.../retirement/.../when-a-retired-letter-carrier-dies-2014>. pdf

Save this page with your important papers...

Notify the employee's immediate supervisor, postmaster and personnel section (if any):

Give the supervisor the Letter Carrier's locker keys and badge as well as information on time and place of memorial services.

Check with USPS Human Resources Shared Service Center at 877-477-3273 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. You should notify HRSSC by calling 877-477-3273.

Notify the Thrift Savings Plan for Death Benefits Claims (only):
Fax Number: (703) 592-0170 Mailing Address: TSP Death Benefits Processing Unit, Fairfax Post Office DEDIS, P.O. Box 4450, Fairfax, VA 22038-9998 or call the ThriftLine, Toll-Free 877-968-3778

Notify the Carrier's NALC branch.

If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office or call toll-free 800-827-1000.

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 or toll-free 800-424- 5184.

If the Carrier was enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan, write 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149 or call toll-free 888-636-6252.

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 (they can suggest how many).

The days following the death of an active Letter Carrier can prove to be quite traumatic. Many forms and notices must be obtained from the Postal Service and completed at this extremely stressful time. The NALC stands ready to assist our members and their families during these difficult times.

Source: NALC Website https://www.nalc.org/workplace.../50499_NALC_Active_WEB-1.pdf

National Association
of Letter Carriers



When an
active
letter
carrier
dies...

Step-by-step instructions for
survivors to notify appropriate
entities and apply for federal benefits

Here are excerpts from a number of articles from various NALC newsletters from all over the country. Your Letter Carrier world is larger than just your case...

snippets

It's a play on words. However, your Rights are the same.

by David J. Grosskopf, President
NALC Branch 3

"It has been brought to my attention that management is using a term they have not used in a while in relation to telling employees they face potential disciplinary action by not using the word 'discipline.'

In the past management would tell employees they were needed for a PDI, or a Pre-Disciplinary Interview. Most Carriers recognized when hearing the word discipline that they needed their steward immediately. Now management is using the words Investigatory Interview (II) which many carriers are not recognizing is the exact same thing as a PDI. Prior to employees being disciplined by management, normally they will be given a pre-disciplinary interview (PDI) or an investigatory interview (II) by management.

If you are given one of these interviews your supervisor or manager is looking for information to use against you so they can issue it to discipline. All Letter Carriers, including CCAs (regardless of how long they have been employed) have Weingarten Rights, which means you have the right to have a union steward present during a meeting in which management asks you questions that could lead to discipline. Your Steward can assist you in any investigation by management and help make sure you get your "day in court."

If called to a meeting with management, U.S. postal inspectors, or an Office of Inspector General (OIG) agent, read the following statement to the person you are meeting with before the meeting starts:

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

Weingarten Rights have been afforded to employees because of federal labor law which was created in the U.S. Supreme Court ruling *NLRB v. Weingarten, INC.*, 420 U.S. 251 (1975). After that ruling from 1975, it created what is known as the Weingarten rule, giving each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline."

If you don't know your Rights, you have none...

This is but one small part of an abridged article courtesy of the NALC Branch 3 Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update published in April 2019



Make a donation by sending a check or money order to NALC Disaster Relief Foundation, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

A Few Things to Think About

by Patrick Mullen, Vice President
NALC Branch 2008

The disaster fund that you see in the Postal Record is growing and we are all encouraged to make a contribution. This is different from the Postal Employee Relief Fund which is part of the CFC. Money from the fund was used to help letter carriers in Paradise, California following the terrible wild fires. Twenty eight letter carriers had their houses burnt to the ground. In Paradise, they had 10 routes before the fires, they now have 2. Anything you can give to help our fellow carriers.

Here is an unbelievable true story out of Chicago and Minneapolis. There are days when some routes just don't go out. Because of a lack of carriers there is nobody to deliver these routes. The carriers are already working past 9pm. Yet in certain parts of the country we have CCAs getting less than 20 hours a week. You couldn't make this stuff up. Somebody called their congressman because they hadn't received mail for 4 straight days. The congressman demanded a meeting with the Post Office. Some manager blamed it on carriers calling in sick. Really? How about distributing employees evenly and hiring where it is needed and don't hire where you already have too many CCAs. It's not rocket science. Hopefully, somebody can fix these problems.

Abridged article courtesy of the April 2019 NALC Branch 2008 Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update

USPS notifies us of unilateral consolidated casing test



**Christopher
Jackson**

USPS notified NALC, in a letter dated Jan. 9, 2019, of their intent under Article 34 of the National Agreement to collect data for the purpose of developing a study related to determining the impact of consolidated casing assignments on city delivery routes. The proposed study appears to involve the same contractual issues NALC has raised in a dispute involving the 2011 caser/streeter test, which remains pending at the national level. In addition, the proposed test, as described, does not appear to be authorized by Article 34 of the National Agreement.

This is a unilateral test and NALC has not agreed to participate in this process. However, NALC representatives will be closely monitoring and observing the testing process.

Following the receipt of this notification, we attended several meetings to clarify the proposed study and the potential impact on our craft. Based on these meetings, our understanding of the Postal Service's concept is explained below.

“NALC representatives will be closely monitoring and observing the testing process.”

The particulars

During the testing process, USPS intends to consolidate six routes into one casing assignment for one letter carrier to case and pull down while other letter carriers come in, get their keys, scanners and accountable items, then go straight to the street. USPS believes it can reduce the amount of office time, including fixed office time, by combining casing duties on multiple routes. USPS also claims that the consolidated casing concept will allow for additional work space to accommodate the increase in parcel volume. Since 2014, USPS reports a reduction in volume of letters and flats of 7 billion pieces, while parcel volume has increased by 641 million pieces during the same time period. USPS believes that the shift in mail mixture has created a significant imbalance between current office time usage and the facility space needed to process parcels. USPS believes this consolidated casing method may resolve both issues.

Carriers performing casing duties will report early in the morning and will have their start times adjusted accordingly. USPS states that casing-assignment carriers may start as early as 5:45 a.m. These carriers will case a total of six routes, three at a time, and prepare them for street delivery. The newly designed consolidated case will consist of three pieces of casing equipment in the traditional horseshoe design with one complete route in each piece of equipment. The cases will have double-sided address labels on plastic strips affixed to the case that can be reversed. USPS uses various methods for attaching these labels. This case labeling method is commonly referred to as 2-into-1 casing for offices already using this system. The casing carrier will case three routes for delivery, pull down the routes, switch the case labels, then case and pull down three additional routes. For example, the caser will case and pull down routes 1-3, then switch the case labels and case routes 4-6. Full-time letter carriers performing casing assignments may be given additional street duties to fulfill their eight-hour requirement.

Carriers performing street duties will report later in the day, with start times scheduled to coincide with the projected time the casing duties are complete. Assignments with street duties may be adjusted with additional deliveries to make up for the loss of office time. USPS states that these carriers will report in two different groups, with the first group to begin tour approximately 8 to 8:30 a.m. and the second group perhaps an hour or an hour and a half later. All letter carriers performing street duties will obtain their own accountable items prior to leaving for the street, and afternoon return-to-office duties will not change.

Some of you may recall the caser/streeter concept that USPS tested in 2011. This test involved some letter carriers performing office duties for multiple routes while the remaining carriers delivered on the street. This test is slightly different based on the proposed case configuration. In caser/streeter, each route maintained its own case, while in this test, multiple routes will be combined into one case. The current test appears to be the Postal Service's attempt to revisit the prior unsuccessful caser/streeter route pilot.

Three phases of testing

On March 21, USPS sent a follow-up notification letter identifying one delivery unit, Annandale, VA, in which testing is scheduled. Evaluation of the existing assignments were to begin on April 8, with testing tentatively to have commenced on May 4. USPS indicates that testing will be done in three phases and has identified one location where this consolidated casing concept is being introduced. In

This is the first page of information provided to each NALC member by way of the May 2019 *Postal Record*. See that publication to learn more!!

a few more snippets

And, more excerpts from a number of articles from various NALC newsletters from all over the country. Your knowledge can lead to better informed decisions...

USPS spent \$Millions and now... the FSS Slows, and the Red Ink Flows

Sunday, January 6, 2019

For the third year in a row, productivity of the U.S. Postal Service's Flats Sequencing System declined in 2018 – with no end in sight to the money-losing machines' troubles.

Hourly throughputs declined 5% during Fiscal Year 2018 and are 14% below where they were five years ago, the USPS reported recently in its Annual Compliance Report. Leakage – the proportion of mail that was supposed to be run on FSS machines but wasn't – rose from 20.1% to 21.9%.

And barely half of FSS mail – 54.2%, down slightly from last year – ended up being sorted in delivery sequence as intended. The only good news is that "Mail Pieces at Risk" -- catalogs or magazines that got jammed in the machines or needed other special handling -- dropped from 5.8% of FSS mail to 4.6%.

The Postal Service has touted various efforts to fix the agency's flats-handling

FSS SCORECARD						
METRIC	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Throughput (pieces/hr.)	8,985	8,746	8,840	8,326	8,111	7,708
Delivery Point Sequence	57.9%	58.6%	60.0%	56.7%	54.7%	54.2%
Mail Pieces at Risk	5.8%	6.2%	5.3%	5.7%	5.8%	4.6%
Leakage					20.1%	21.9%

processes, but the compliance report says it "is still unable to provide an estimate of the financial impacts of these operational initiatives" because of flaws in its data-management systems. One such flaw, an Inspector General's report revealed recently, is that FSS facilities are apparently doing nothing to track, understand, or correct the causes of leakage.

The Postal Regulatory Commission asked the USPS on Friday to explain why this year's Annual Compliance Report makes no mention of Lean Mail Processing, which postal officials touted last year as "an initiative to make processing USPS Marketing (AKA Standard) Mail Flats and Periodicals mail more efficient." (Puh-leeze! Lean Management is so 2017.)

Cost coverage worsens
The FSS's failures contributed to greater unprofitability for the two main types of mail handled by the FSS machines – non-

carrier-route Marketing Mail ("Marketing Flats") and Periodicals. Rather than fixing the causes of the red ink – by scrapping the FSS machines, for example – postal officials have pressed for abolition of the inflation-based price cap on flats mail.

USPS's costs per Marketing Flat mail piece rose an astounding 13.4%, causing cost coverage to decline from 74.0% to 68.6%. Postal officials blamed lower economies of scale, as increased co-mailing by printers shifted flat mail from Marketing Flats (17.5% volume decline) to such lower-cost categories as High-Density Flats (up 20.0%).

The cost per Periodicals piece increased only 1.3%, while revenue per piece declined by the same amount – perhaps also because of more co-mailing. The result is that the Postal Service's highly questionable costing methodology showed that Periodicals covered only 67.54% of their costs, down from 69.33%

Source: Dead Tree Edition.

Article courtesy of the Santa Barbara, California May 2019 NALC Branch 290 *Beast of Burden*

Comments from the VP

Kevin Gottlieb, NALC Branch 79 Vice President

"For whatever reason, I was asked by Dave Heizler (of the Riverton Station) to announce that he is the greatest Carrier ever.

I guess writing the Riverton Review isn't enough satisfaction for him and he needs to have his name in everyone's article."

This excerpt, with a wave and a nod to Dave Heizler, courtesy of the Seattle, Washington Branch 79 March 2019 *Seventy-Niner*. Thanks, Kevin!!

The employer has an obligation to employees to resolve problems before they become grievances. There are clear rules for conduct and behavior.

by Bonnie Doherty, First Vice President
NALC Branch 1100

M-39 115.4 Mutual Respect Atmosphere: *The National Agreement sets out the basic rules and rights governing management and employees in their dealings with each other; but it is the front-line manager who controls managements attempt to maintain an atmosphere between employer and employee which assures mutual respect for each other's rights and responsibilities.*

Violence and behavior in the workplace: *There is no excuse for, and will be no tolerance of, violence or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service; and that there is no excuse for, and will be no tolerance of harrassment, intimidation, threats or bullying by anyone. The need for the USPS to serve the public efficiently and productively and the need for all employees to be committed to giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, does not justify actions that are abusive or intolerant. "Making the numbers," is not an excuse for abuse of anyone. Those who do not treat others with dignity and respect will not be rewarded or promoted. Those whose unacceptable behavior continues will be removed from their positions (MOU 2/14/92)*

Abridged article courtesy of the February - March 2019 Garden Grove, California NALC Branch 1100 *Union Carier*

Gone are the thousands of parcels each day

by Richard Najera, President
NALC Branch 231

Gone are the thousands of parcels each day, the tens of thousands of parcels we had each week during peak season. Sunday delivery has dwindled to a handful of packages that are very akin to the scraps left over and dropped to the floor from the table at the end of a great feast.

If it hasn't yet happened in your neck of the woods, consider yourself lucky for now.

With Amazon's huge investment into a delivery service system infrastructure for packages, they'll soon be looking to steal customers not only from us, but from our other competitors as well. Amazon will become the new cancer that will supplant Walmart – who interestingly enough is trying to add its own desperate flavor to the package pickup and delivery world.

Well, it's obviously not a good thing that the Service, our employer, has lost quite a huge chunk of revenue — *but it's not that.*

It's the hypocrisy. It's the fact that they don't live by one of the very "rules" they tell the rest of us: **"When times are lean: don't live beyond your means."**

We've been in a downward spiral for mail volume for years (how fast it's gone down depended on who you asked and with what comparisons were being made. But there they are, investing all that wonderful parcel revenue into things like parcel-sorting machines.

So, whose idea was it to invest in something that sorts tons of parcels (at 25,000 pieces an hour) when we don't have tons of parcels to sort? I haven't seen any credit assessed to anyone in particular; but, whoever it is should've taken Logic 101!!

Just because a trillion dollar company starts building enormous "parcel housing" in your area, doesn't mean that they're planning to use you to do the delivering...

And so...here we are. Your boss is likely in full panic mode and telling you that the sky is falling. I tell you now that there *is* at least some truth to be found in this sentiment.

However, it isn't fair in the least that craft employees once again bear the burden of saving the Service by trying to meet any unreasonable expectations that may start rolling out this year! For example, has

your supervisor already tried to tell you that you need to be out of the office thirty minutes after you've clocked in — even though your estimate has you leaving closer to an hour? It's your boss trying to "gut" the office time by (presumably) taking out everything but the office break, a few minutes of FOT (fixed office time), and the casing and pull-down time.

Carriers have an obligation to follow not only the flow chart (such as it is) but to also follow what's in the M-41. If your boss is telling you that you've got thirty minutes to get out of the office, talk to your Shop Steward RIGHT AWAY!

Of course, this doesn't mean everyone can sit complacently until the ship sinks. We ALL must continue to do our jobs!

We should also expect that management do their jobs as well. Yes, they have an obligation to the Service, but that also includes to its employees.

And, in turn, we employees — if we want to continue to receive a paycheck — need to ensure that we are doing our jobs safely and efficiently and asking only for the time that we need to get the job done.

And in turn the employees, if they want to continue to receive a paycheck, need to ensure that they are doing their jobs safely and efficiently, asking for only what they need to get the job done.

Abridged article courtesy of the Fresno California May 2019 NALC Branch 231 *Postman's View*



from the editor-guy

The *NALC Editor Resource Book* is Volume II of Fred Acedo cartoons. It presents almost 1100 of Fred Acedo's cartoons published in our newsletter from 2003 - 2016. This book builds on the almost 500 cartoons in the original **Out tHeRe** book which featured his work from 1993 through 2002. *Welcome to Volume II!*

You may have questions about how this book can be used or whether or not it will be a good investment. You can call me at the phone number listed below. You can write to me, or you can e-mail me at BRZIII@AOLCOM. I would be glad to answer your questions or give you an idea of how this product can be a creative tool for your current or future NALC editor in presenting information to NALC members. *(Please follow this trail ***)*

This book is an excellent book of clip art designed specifically for, by and about NALC members and our world. (Yes. I am biased. I believe that this **IS** an excellent book of clip art! I hope that you agree...)

Additionally, an index is provided that links ALL of the cartoons in both the original **Out tHeRe** and in Volume II to assist editors in searching out cartoons by topic (e.g. dogs, injuries, supervisors, etc.).

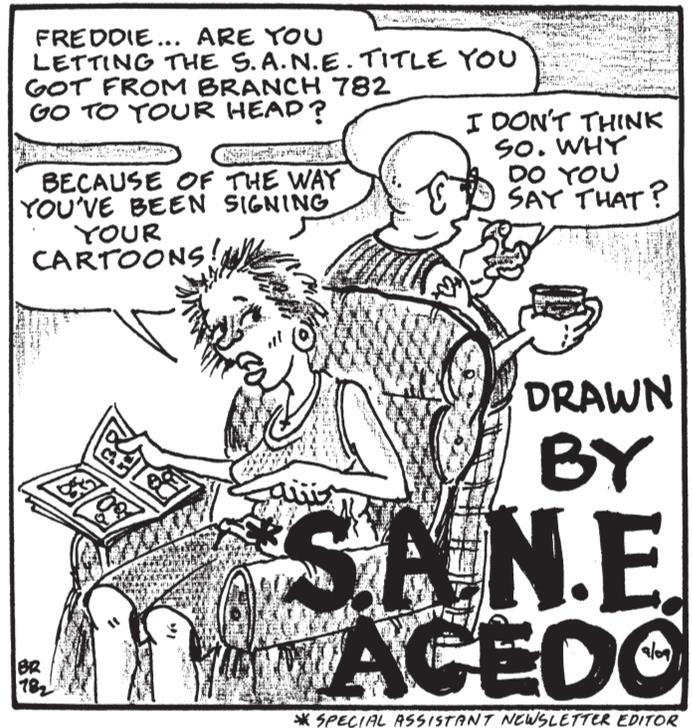
BASIL ZUNIGA

- • • • •
- **Please send me one or more *NALC Editor Resource Books!* I want Fred's cartoons!** •
- Base cost is **\$30** but you can donate more. (Cost covers wear & tear, paper, toner, etc.) •
- ***** SPECIAL OFFER:** I will include a copy of **Out tHeRe** with this order. **500 more cartoons!** •
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Please include \$7.90 for USPS Priority Mail postage.

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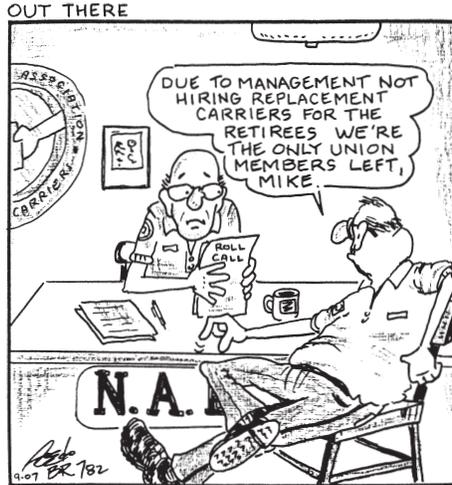
Curious about what you might be getting? Check out the sample featured on the following page.



This is a sample. You are looking at page 74 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016...



Originally published April 2009



Originally published April 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009

from the editor-guy

Memorial Day is celebrated at the end of this month. It is a day to honor those members of the American military who died in the service of this country.

This piece is about one man who defied all the odds and lived through combat when he probably shouldn't have. It is also a testament to a truly indomitable spirit.

“Remember the guy who wouldn't take the flag pole down on his Virginia property a few years ago?”

You might remember the news story about a crotchety old man in Virginia who defied his local homeowners association. He refused to take down the flag pole on his property along with the large American flag he flew on it.

Now we learn who that old man was.

On June 15, 1919, Van T. Barfoot was born in Edinburg, Texas.

That probably didn't make news back then.

But, twenty-five years later — on May 23, 1944 near Carano, Italy — that same Van T. Barfoot (who had, in 1940, enlisted in the U.S. Army) set out alone to flank German machine gun positions from which gunfire was raining down on his fellow soldiers.

His advance took him through a mine-field. But, having done so, he proceeded to single-handedly take out three enemy machine gun positions...returning with 17 prisoners of war.

And if that weren't enough for a day's work, he later took on and destroyed three German tanks sent to retake the machine gun positions.

That probably didn't make much news either, given the scope of the war.



Seems the HOA rules said it was OK to fly a flag on a house-mounted bracket; but, “for decorum”, items such as Barfoot's 21-foot flagpole were “unsuitable”.

Van Barfoot had been denied a permit for the pole, but erected it anyway. And? He was facing court action unless he agreed to take it down.

Then? The homeowner association story made national TV...

The homeowner association rethought its position and agreed to indulge this aging hero who dwelt among them.

“In the time I have left”, he said to the Associated Press, “I plan to continue to fly the American flag without [interference.]”

As Well he should!!

And, if any of his neighbors had taken a notion to contest him further, they might have done well to read his Medal of Honor citation first. Seems it indicates Mr. Van Barfoot wasn't particularly good at backing down...

WE ONLY LIVE IN THE LAND OF THE FREE BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE OLD MEN LIKE VAN BARFOOT!

Van T. Barfoot died March 2, 2012 at a hospital in Richmond, Virginia. He was 92.”

But, it did earn Van T. Barfoot (who retired as a Colonel after also serving in Korea and Vietnam) a well deserved Congressional Medal of Honor!

What DID make News?

His neighborhood association's quibble with how the 90-year-old Veteran chose to fly the American flag outside his suburban Virginia home.

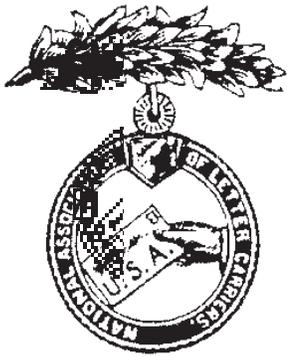


Last month, I wrote that I periodically receive correspondence from our members.

Bill Curtis is a former Branch 782 Trustee and California State Association of Letter Carriers District Officer. He was also the recipient of many hours of steward time during a postal career which spanned 28 years before he retired in 2008. More importantly, Bill is a decorated USN Vietnam War Sailor who experienced combat duty in the “brown water navy” — and who has vivid memories of his own about that conflict.

He religiously shares articles with me. This is one of them.

Basil Zuniga says, “Thanks, Bill! I hope somebody else reads this.”



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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. E-mails are preferred...

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
(C) (661) 205-1603
e-mail: brzii@aol.com

Paul Greenfield, Assistant Editor
(C) (661) 203-7802

The "S.A.N.E."*
Fred Acedo, Cartoonist
*(Special Assistant Newsletter Editor)
P.O. Box 6532
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532
e-mail: outthere5150@yahoo.com

Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer
Dholderman@bak.r.com

NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

Arvin (93203)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
Avenal (93204)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Delano (93215)	Blanca Ibarra	(661) 725-1526
Lamont (93241)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
McFarland (93250)	Bonnie Whitbey	(661) 487-0972
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Taft (93268)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Wasco (93280)	Joanne Layton	(661) 204-4928
Downtown Station (93301)	Teresa Ortega	(661) 391-8026
South Station (93304)	Judy Kiyoshi	(661) 817-5529
South Station Alternate	Darryl Holderman	(661) 487-5353
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar	(661) 303-3603
East Bakersfield (Alternate)	Gilroy Manglicmot	(661) 301-2156
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Gilroy Manglicmot	(661) 301-2156
Hillcrest Station (Alternate)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Dole Court (93308)	Denise Ream	(661) 304-6625
Dole Court (Alternate)	David Treto	(661) 865-8922
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Stockdale Station (93309)	Maria Valenzuela	(661) 496-5929
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Camino Media (Alternate)	Paul Salazar	(661) 303-3603
Mojave (93501)	Delga Loza	(661) 824-8332
California City (93504)	Ryan Gerstl	(761) 373-4180
Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93523)	Vacant	
Ridgecrest (93555)	Lynnel Howell	(760) 382-3030
Tehachapi (93561)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Trona (93562)	Lynnel Howell	(760) 382-3030

OWCP Representative
CCA Representative
USPS Social Recreation Rep

Rick Gerdes (661) 301-9675
Gilroy Manglicmot (661) 301-2156
Paul Greenfield (661) 203-7802

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

Rick Plummer, Webmaster





National Association of Letter Carriers
 "Golden Empire Branch 782"
 2628 "F" Street
 Bakersfield, California 93301
 (661) 331-9171

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Bakersfield, California
 Permit Number 32

General Meeting

Wednesday

May 22, 2019

7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
 2628 "F" Street
 Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

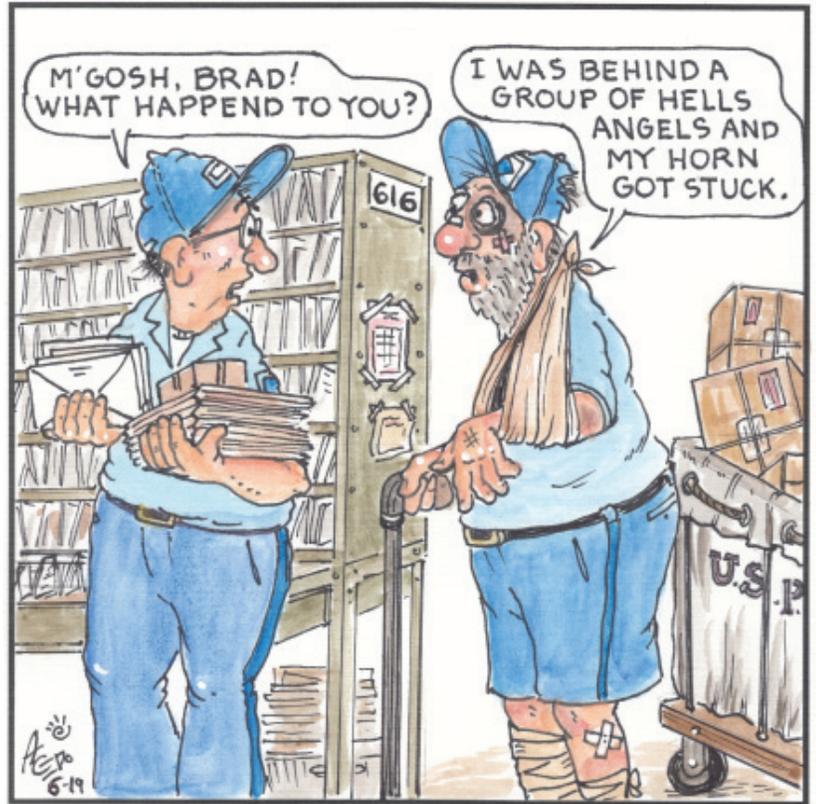
PROPOSED NALC BRANCH 782 BY-LAWS CHANGES TO BE VOTED ON AT MAY 2019 MEETING

Details on pages 5 - 9



The Carriers in Arvin **DOUBLED** last years totals!!!

"OuT tHeRe"



Info on pages 1-7...

Congratulations to our newest Retirees: Darlene Archie and Bobby Cruz!!! And, catch up on what other of our recent Retirees are doing with all the time they now have in their lives...

Additional details on pages 15 through 25...

The print version of our newsletter had 24 pages. This web version has grown to 40 pages. More pictures. More "schtuff". More things to check out if you've made it this far...