

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



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WEB VERSION

JULY 2020

Increased Parcel Volume Doesn't Mean We Don't Need Stimulus Money

By Eric Ellis,
CSALC District 4 Officer

So I see that Senator Ron Johnson, as well as Representatives Jim Jordan and Jody Hice wrote a letter to our outgoing postmaster general on June 8 stating the postal service doesn't need any stimulus money.

Their reasoning is an increase of \$330 million in revenue over the first eleven weeks of the crisis caused by the pandemic (compared to the same period last year). And, yes, I agree that any increase in revenue is a good thing. After all, our customers pay our salaries through use of our products. And all of us need to do our due diligence in promoting our services.

Having written that, I strenuously disagree with their conclusion. First, you need look no further than the authors of the letter. *All three favor the privatization of the United States Postal Service.* All three regularly oppose any pro-Letter Carrier legislation, such as continuing six-day regular mail delivery or repealing the pre-funding requirement. And Sen. Johnson, who chairs the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, wants the USPS to declare bankruptcy. So why would you take anything they say or write regarding your future with any degree of seriousness or truth. They would like nothing more than to see your employer gutted, split into pieces, and hundreds of thousands of postal employees on the unemployment line.

Yes, they are among those who salivate at the thought of reducing the federal government headcount at any cost. And they admit that the increased revenue only puts off our day of reckoning in which the USPS runs out of money until sometime next year.

And just because our revenue is up a bit is no reason to pop open the champagne bottles.

Where is the increase coming from? Parcels! And as Letter Carriers, what do we know about delivering parcels as opposed to letters and flats? For most letters and flats, you don't need a scanner. And that makes parcel delivery more labor-intensive than other mail, because it requires not only the step of scanning the item, but also finding a place to deliver it if it doesn't fit in the mail receptacle or having to make contact with the customer.

And it's not just more labor-intensive for us, it also creates extra work at the processing plants and at the stations we work at.

And another thing all of us need to concern ourselves with involves the continued decrease in first-class letter and flat volume.



Continued on page 6...

Postal Service memos detail ‘difficult’ changes — including slower mail delivery

By Jacob Bogage
July 14, 2020 at 9:47 a.m. PDT

The new head of the U.S. Postal Service established major operational changes Monday that could slow down mail delivery, warning employees the agency would not survive unless it made “difficult” changes to cut costs. But critics say such a philosophical sea change would sacrifice operational efficiency and cede its competitive edge to UPS, FedEx and other private-sector rivals.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy told employees to *leave mail behind at distribution centers if it delayed letter carriers from their routes*, according to internal USPS documents obtained by *The Washington Post* and verified by the American Postal Workers Union and three people with knowledge of their contents, but who spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid retribution.

“If the plants run late, they will keep the mail for the next day,” according to a document titled, “New PMG’s [Postmaster General’s] expectations and plan.” *Traditionally, postal workers are trained not to leave letters behind and to make multiple delivery trips to ensure timely distribution of letters and parcels.*

The memo cited U.S. Steel, a onetime industry titan that was slow to adapt to market changes, to illustrate what is at stake. “In 1975 they were the largest company in the world,” the memo states. “They are gone.” (U.S. Steel is a \$1.7 billion company with 27,500 employees.)

Analysts say the documents present a stark reimagining of the USPS that could chase away customers — *especially if the White House gets the steep package rate increases it wants* — and put the already beleaguered agency in deeper financial peril as private-sector competitors embark

on hiring sprees to build out their own delivery networks.

Congress authorized the USPS to borrow an additional \$10 billion from the Treasury Department for emergency operations in an early coronavirus relief bill. But postal leaders have yet to access the money over disagreements with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who attached terms on the loan that would turn over operations of much of the Postal Service to his department.

The Postal Service’s governing board appointed DeJoy, *a major Trump donor and seasoned logistics executive*, in the middle of that back-and-forth.

Steep drop-offs in first-class and marketing mail, the Postal Service’s most profitable items, have exacerbated the USPS’s cash crisis; postal leaders predicted at the start of the pandemic that their agency would be insolvent by October without congressional intervention.

Single-piece, first-class mail volume fell 15 to 20 percent week to week in April and May, agency leaders told lawmakers last month. Marketing mail, the hardest-hit segment, tumbled 30 to 50 percent week to week during the same period.

Skyrocketing package volume, up 60 to 80 percent in May as the coronavirus pandemic made consumers more reliant on delivery services, has propped up the Postal Service’s finances and staved off immediate financial calamity.

But the packages also have intensified the USPS’s

competition with Amazon, FedEx and UPS, industry leaders looking to capitalize on enduring changes in consumer habits brought on by shelter-in-place orders.

The Trump administration has consolidated control over the Postal Service, traditionally an apolitical institution, during the pandemic by making a financial lifeline for the nation’s mail service contingent upon the White House political agenda.

President Trump in April called the agency “a joke” and demanded it quadruple package rates before he’d authorize any emergency aid or loans.

The Postal Service’s future needs to be as a low-cost package carrier, industry analysts contend, as parcels make up a growing portion of the agency’s volume and profits, and paper mail volumes continue to decline as coupons and bills increasingly move online.

Postal leaders project the agency could run out of money between March and October 2021.

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“Attacks on USPS not only threaten our economy and the jobs of 600,000 workers. With our states now reliant on mail voting to continue elections during the pandemic, the destabilizing of the post office is a direct attack on American democracy itself,” said Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-N.J.). “It has been 59 days since the House passed \$25 billion to keep USPS alive. The Senate must pass it now. Democracy hangs in the balance.”

The Postal Service said in a statement that it was “developing a business plan to ensure that we will be financially stable and able to continue to provide reliable, affordable, safe and secure delivery of mail, packages and other communications to all Americans as a vital part of the nation’s critical infrastructure.”

It said the plan was not finalized, but would include *“new and creative ways for us to fulfill our mission, and we will focus immediately on efficiency and items that we can control, including adherence to the effective operating plans that we have developed.”*

But the documents circulated Monday on shop floors around the country called for

specific changes in the way postal workers will do their jobs.

“Every single employee will receive this information, no matter what job they perform, so remember that YOU are an integral part of the success we will have — again, by working together,” the second document states.

“The shifts are simple, but they will be challenging, as we seek to change our culture and move away from past practices previously used,” it adds.

The first memo says the agency will prohibit overtime and strictly curtail the use of other measures local postmasters use to ameliorate staffing shortages.

Even a common method for mail delivery — “park points,” in which letter carriers park their mail trucks at the end of a street, deliver mail items by foot for several blocks, then return to the trucks and drive on — is under scrutiny.

The document bans carriers from taking more than four “park points” on their routes and claims “park points are abused, not cost effective and taken advantage of.”

“It’s like a riot act,” Rubio said. “Overtime is being used because people need their packages in this pandemic,”

said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents 200,000 USPS employees. “They need their mail in this pandemic. They need their medicines in this pandemic. They need their census forms. They need ballot information.”

The second memo says the Postal Service will first look to cut its transportation costs, and estimates that late and extra trips cost the agency \$200 million annually in “added expenses,” or about the same amount the agency lost in May. The memo warns postal workers that it may be “difficult” to “see mail left behind or mail on the workroom floor,” but that the agency “will address root causes of these delays and adjust the very next day.”

Postal union leaders condemned the measures and said customer service is being sacrificed for only meager cost savings.

“I would tell our members that this is not something that as postal workers we should accept,” Dimondstein said. “It’s not something that the union you belong to is going to accept.”

Jeff Bogage is a staff writer for the Washington Post

Source — <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/07/14/postal-service-trump-dejoy-delay-mail/?outputType=amp>



Sometimes we have a moment to make a decision which will have a big impact on the course of our lives. It isn't too farfetched to think that, if we don't make a certain decision, we will look back later and have some regrets. The choice to make an investment in YOUR future through the NALC LCPF will not be life-changing now — \$5 a paycheck isn't going to bankrupt you today. But, that same \$5 a paycheck may well bring about future security.....

SIGN ME UP!

Contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using

* PostalEASE – ONLINE Enrollment

* Electronic Transfer

* Annuity

New Postmaster General Is an Expert Job-Killer

By Joe Piette,
LABORNOTES.ORG

Much of the criticism of new Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has centered on his \$2 million in contributions to the Trump campaign and other Republican causes since 2016. DeJoy was in charge of fundraising for the Republican National Convention in Charlotte.

These facts are cause for worry, but postal workers should be even more alarmed at his 35 years' experience in labor analytics—the art of eliminating as many jobs as possible. His company has a terrible labor record, rife with red flags including sexual harassment, discrimination, speedup, workplace injuries, excessive use of temps, misclassifying workers as independent contractors, and inadequate sick leave during the current pandemic.

DeJoy, whose term begins June 15, is only the fifth postmaster general since 1971 not to come from within the U.S. Postal Service bureaucracy.

DeJoy's New-Breed Logistics (before it-merged with-XP-O4 was a contractor to the USPS for more than 25 years, "supplying the organization with logistics support for multiple processing facilities," the USPS announcement revealed.

XPO Logistics does extensive business with the Postal Service (\$57 million in 2017), potentially putting DeJoy in the position of overseeing decisions that affect his personal financial interests. He served terms as XPO's CEO and board member before retiring in 2018; the company continues to rent warehouse space from him, and he and his wife own between \$25 million and \$50 million in XPO stock.

The funding that the postal board of governors is asking from Congress includes \$25 billion for "modernization.". What might DeJoy's version of modernization look like?

Take a look at the website of XPO: "Our focus is on robotics, autonomous vehicles, automated sortation systems, drones and other cutting-edge technologies that speed goods through the supply chain...."

For the full article, go to: <https://labornotes.org/blogs/2020/05/new-postmaster-generalexpert-job-killer>

Modified article courtesy of the *South Jersey Letter Carriers* published by Pennille, New Jersey NALC Branch 908 in June 2020

"Who" the American President is DOES impact Letter Carriers...

"In 1954, Congress responded to NALC's call for economic justice.... Congress passed a more realistic and fairer postal pay bill by landslide majorities—352-29 in the House and 69-4 in the Senate. The bill, however, stopped dead in its tracks in the summer of 1954, for Eisenhower, just as Calvin Coolidge had done in 1924, vetoed the pay bill.

The veto, a bitter pill for letter carriers to swallow, was only the beginning of Eisenhower's quiet assault on the welfare of postal workers. One year later, on May 9, 1955, the president vetoed another pay raise for postal workers. Finally, in June 1955, a pay bill was signed into law—letter carriers' first pay increase in four years.

Critical as the increase was, it did not pacify rank-and-file carriers who were shocked at the administration's intense opposition. In August 1956, a letter carrier in Worcester, Massachusetts hinted of rebellion: Are we not entitled to partake of the American way of life? We are sick of sympathy. If only the letter carrier would realize the dormant power in his ranks. We never would accept the answer: "They have no bread? Then let them eat cake."

Three months later, The Postal Record reported that "the average American family" earned \$5,520 a year before taxes in 1955 while the average letter carrier earned \$4,400—\$1,120 a year less. Yet, the 1956 Republican platform stated: "Good times in America have reached a breadth and depth never known by any nation."

Another postal pay bill, approved by Congress, was vetoed by Eisenhower in September 1957. And not only did Eisenhower veto it, but he resorted to the pocket veto technique to kill it—waiting until members of Congress had gone home before announcing his veto decision.

At the same time, U. S. News and World Report reported that while the wages of workers in private industry had increased between \$20 and \$36 a week in the previous five years, letter carriers' wages had increased by a mere \$5.50."

In the early 1900s, George Santayana wrote: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This info, sourced from *Carriers in a Common Casue — A History of Letter Carriers and the NALC* is something to remember...



SIGN ME UP!

How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using PostalEASE — ONLINE Enrollment

Through PostalEASE, active letter carriers can contribute directly from their USPS paychecks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll "allotments."

Online Enrollment

1. Login to USPS's Postal Ease website at <https://ewss.usps.gov>
You may also get to the Postal Ease website through the USPS LiteBlue website See the instructions below
2. Click "I agree"
3. Enter your Employee ID number and Password and click "Submit"
If you have not yet set up a password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/welcome.xhtml>
If you forgot your password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/einVerification.xhtml>
4. Under Payroll click "Allotments / Payroll Net To Bank"
5. Click "Continue"
6. Click "Allotments"
7. Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
8. Enter your 17-digit Account Number _____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
See instructions in step D at right
9. Enter Account type as "checking"
10. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ _____
The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000
11. Click VALIDATE
12. Click SUBMIT
13. Print or write down your confirmation number for your records

BEFORE YOU START, YOU'LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS password
- C. Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number). See the example below.



- D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces below:
_____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5

To get to Postal Ease through Lite Blue:

- Got to www.liteblue.usps.gov
- Enter you employee ID and Password and click "Log On"
- Click "My HR"
- Click "Employee Apps"
- Click "PostalEASE"
- Begin at step 1 above

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

Continued from front cover...

And we all see it. Almost every day, I case more small parcels than flats or letters, and — sometimes — I case more SPRs than letters/flats combined.

What does that mean going forward? At some point in time, the postal service will need to reconfigure how we do our jobs, from the methodology of the Letter Carrier work itself to the tools needed. The office standard is 18 letters or 8 flats a minute. But what if you case more SPRs than anything else?

And as the mix of mail we take to the street continues to change, how will our routes look in the future? And the machinery needed to process mail. Will we need more machines to process parcels?

So why do we still need the \$25 billion plus, you ask? I can think of some good uses for the money. Namely:

1. The immediate upgrade of our vehicle fleet. We cannot continue to drive vehicles (namely, the Long Life or LLVs) which should have been retired 5-10 years ago.
2. The purchase of equipment needed to process the increase in parcel volume. If we are to stay in business, that is

where our future is, unless younger people use the USPS to pay their bills by mail. Which scenario would you bet on?

3. The USPS needs to be reimbursed for any sick leave or FMLA leave taken by postal employees due to the pandemic.
4. Offer buyouts to retirement-eligible employees and those eligible for early retirement. The USPS would save money hand-over-fist by getting the expensive employees (who are maxed out in annual leave accrual and pay) off its rolls and hiring new employees to take their places.
5. As front-line workers exposed to pandemic-caused dangers, we deserve hazard pay.
6. Other miscellaneous upgrades to postal infrastructure.

So my message to you is this: Please support our National union leadership. If a Carrier asks for info, suggest they go to nalc.org and click 'Action Needed'. Or, direct your friends and co-workers to heroesdelivering.com so that our elected representatives include much needed relief for the USPS in the next stimulus package. Please do so!

Don't leave your future to someone like Senator Johnson. He has shown, repeatedly, that we cannot trust him.

Support USPS in next emergency stimulus

As Letter Carriers on the front lines of serving 160 million Americans and businesses every day, you know that the Covid-19 pandemic is something we have never experienced before. While our Letter Carriers show their resilience, strength, and continued service to the public every day, the Postal Service looms closer to shuttering due to the staggering loss in mail volume and revenue during this crisis. It's a desperate situation that only Congress and the Administration can help solve.

We cannot allow the USPS to fail.

Unfortunately, instead of providing much needed immediate financial assistance urged by NALC and stakeholders, the last stimulus gave the Postal Service a slap in the face by giving it access to a conditional line of credit. Those conditions aren't new to Letter Carriers - as they seek to destroy the network and attack Letter Carriers at the behest of private shippers. This is **NOT** a solution. It is a way to weaken the Postal Service by riddling it with more debt to the point where opponents of the constitutionally mandated service will destroy it.

While it's been 40 years since we have needed taxpayer funding, we need financial relief to continue to serve this country through this crisis — **and we need it now**. Thankfully, the American public is on our side. A recent bipartisan poll (viewable at the NALC website) showed that 92 percent of voters support direct funding for the Postal Service in the next pandemic response Bill.



Please take a minute to send a letter to your members of Congress. Tell them that we need: **An immediate and significant injection of money – and secure, regular appropriations for the Postal Service until this crisis is over.**

Source: NALC Website <https://app7.vocusgr.com/WebPublish/Controller.aspx?SiteName=NALC&Definition=ViewIssue&IssueID=2512>

THE NEW POSTAL SERVICE FACE COVERING POLICY

By Richard Najera, NALC Branch 231 President

Whatever your stance on the current coronavirus pandemic — including those who believe that the news media is reporting overblown statistics or exacerbating its effect to mislead the public — one thing is clear: ***The Service has now officially taken steps to join the ranks of the many employers, both private and public, and implemented a policy that makes it a requirement for face-coverings while on-the-job.***

This comes at a time when the Governor of California stepped up his commitment to address the reported increase of Covid-19 cases in the state. For a federal agency, isn't really necessary for them to dictate changes to an existing policy.

USPS can even adopt a new one in order to comply with or adapt to a given safety or health concern. Nor is it a requirement that they obtain agreement from the signatory unions to take such action.

To this end, the USPS, our employer, need only react to the rather startling increase in the number of positive covid-19 cases within each district (irrespective of the classification of employee), to make a decision that would affect the workplace for each and every postal worker – from the highest levels of management to the lowest, as well as each and every member from the various crafts.

This is not to say that the NALC was not apprised in advance of management's intent to issue new safety requirements, for which I am grateful for the chance to provide feedback.

But, the conception of and rollout of the changes were done unilaterally.

In my opinion (and I have stated this many times already in the form of constructive criticism to my management counterparts), the way it was done did not take into account that not everyone would or could be able to comply with the new instructions (at least not immediately).

This resulted in more of a knee-jerk reaction "mess" rather than a "reaping of the rewards" of a well thought out plan of action.

Any new mandatory orders should have, at least, given a short grace period to properly address as many legitimate problems with compliance as possible before resorting to a "Do It Or Else" posture. A fair, measured response, with clear instructions, including those for contingencies, would have been best.

People are already stressed out enough within their own private lives. Avoiding an elevated level of anxiety at work should have been attributed the same level of importance as was given the enacting of a policy to try and curb the spread of the virus.

Having said all that does not diminish the fact that the employer has taken definitive steps toward addressing the potential spread of the disease. But even now, as of the writing of this article, ***I have yet to hear that everyone has been told what exactly the policy is, what is needed for compliance and what are the consequences for noncompliance.***

Let us review. But, bear in mind this must still be done by the Service for it to be considered as "official."

The policy was supposed to make clear that everyone — ***and that means EVERYONE*** — employed/working within a postal building, facility, office, or annex is to wear a face covering of some sort. (Read to mean ***EVERY*** postal workplace.)

This applies to ***ALL*** EAS (management) personnel as well as all Craft employees, including those without direct public contact while in the workplace. It is currently considered as an enforceable rule all the time by the USPS.

There are ongoing disagreements about whether existing social distancing guidelines can still be used to relax specific aspects of the new requirements while, for example, at the Carrier cases.

It was offered that, while in the case, a Carrier should be able to remove the mask while remaining in that relatively enclosed space.

At this time, management has said that maintaining face coverings at ***ALL*** times is the best chance at ensuring that no one forgets to replace the mask when leaving the case or when approached by another employee during the daily and afternoon or evening duties.

In other words, better to make it an absolute requirement than trust that everyone will react in accordance with the rules.

Continued on next page...

No Minutes from the June 2020 General Meeting. It was cancelled. Also cancelled, the July meeting.

THE NEW POSTAL SERVICE FACE COVERING POLICY

Continued from page 3...

If you choose to push the envelope of noncompliance I must warn you that the Service may exercise its right to pursue corrective action, and currently the courts would seem to be on the side of the employer.

I will say that there is nothing that says you cannot request to stay at home, subject of course to existing attendance policies and how much of your own leave you want to spend.

Whether or not changes come about is beyond the scope of our current situation as no known case currently in court has rendered a decision, for or against.

And then there are those who may have legitimate medical or other reasons for why

they cannot wear a face covering or mask. For employees in this group, *the need to provide medical documentation is going to be an absolute requirement* — especially if requesting to use a Service-provided face shield to be worn in lieu of a paper mask or other face-covering.

At one point, management suggested that employees with medical issues needed to be put through the DRAC before being allowed to wear a face shield or other suitable accommodation. Thankfully, they dropped that in favor of requiring just a doctor's note stating that the employee cannot wear a face mask.

Nothing is needed if the employee wants to provide their own face shield – but keep in mind that “alternatives” such as Hal-

loween masks or face coverings that make a political statement or convey a charged or incendiary message will be rejected outright.

I will also note that the Service **cannot** require anyone to use an N95 respirator mask – just want to make that clear.

If you observe or experience what you consider to be an inconsistency with the existing safety policy with regard to the use of face coverings, please bring it to the attention of your Shop Steward. Absent that option, contact the union office so the issue may be addressed.

Please work safely and act conscientiously as you continue to provide an essential service to our customers and thank you once more for all that you do!

Modified article courtesy of the Fresno, California NALC Branch 231 July 2020 *Postman's View*

Most recent www.cdc.gov update:

As of July 12, 2020, there have been 3,236,130 Covid-19 cases identified in the United States and the U.S. territories. There have been 134,572 deaths — sixteen have been Letter Carriers. On April 16, there were 632,548 cases and 31,071 deaths.

Executive NALC VP Renfroe delivers regular updates on COVID-19 to you on the NALC's "You Are The Current Resident" Podcast. To listen on your smart phone, we recommend downloading the PodBean app. Then, more information can be heard @ [HTTPS://WWW.NALC.ORG/NEWS/NALC-AUDIO](https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-audio).

June 25, 2020 — Branch 1081 member passes away from coronavirus

60-year-old Letter Carrier Kerry Morrissey, a member of Branch 1081 in Ames, IA, passed away Saturday, June 13, from complications related to COVID-19. Brother Morrissey worked at the Ames Post Office for 27 years, most recently as the Vehicle Operations and Maintenance Assistant (VOMA).

July 9, 2020 — Branch 385 member passes away from coronavirus

72-year-old retired Letter Carrier Raymond Earl Moore, a member of Branch 385 in Youngstown, OH, died on Sunday, April 5, from complications related to COVID-19. Brother Moore joined the United States Army at age 17 and served for 20 years before becoming a Letter Carrier and serving another 20 years with the Postal Service.

Source: NALC Website "Latest News and Updates" <https://www.nalc.org/>

Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC? See the national NALC website. Also, stay in touch with your Branch 782 Officers if you have questions!

Safety — These Crazy Days in Blue Stripes

By Stevie Pickett, NALC Branch 25 Assistant Safety Officer (Wakefield P.O.)

This morning, while I listened to commercials saying that your country needs you to “stay home” on your couch, I am busy pulling up my blue-striped postal trousers and preparing to leave for the post office, just like my brother and sister “street smart” Letter Carriers nationwide. I believe that we — the NALC — maintained some stabilizing sense of normalcy as we helped to play our roles on the delivery front lines to keep our mighty and massive country running when most other professions were ordered to remain at home and sequester. Somehow, that gave me a refreshing morale boost and made me feel important that I was a needed Union employee in an essential career. We, as a proud and strong NALC Union, have always unrelentingly persisted and persevered to deliver the mail for the deserving citizens of these wonderful United States of America!

So, something needs to be said to my fellow NALC Union members about how they are constantly displaying their bravery and courage while daily delivering the mail to our customers during these frightening, stressful, and unprecedented last few months. ***“We are still working every day throughout this devastating, deadly coronavirus pandemic, when the majority of occupations are told to ‘stay home in safety’.”***

Why? Well, I suppose that our honorable sense of duty and dedication to our USPS customer service is able to overcome our fears, fatigue and confusion. Currently, as we come to terms with our new challenging, daunting situation, we continue to prove our tenacity and dependability by showing up at our post offices.

We persist in completing our delivery rounds cautiously, during these present scary times of uncertainty, despair and fear. We are risking our health each day at work when most people are remaining home so as not to risk being infected.

These are, indeed, tough and challenging days! However, us “mail baggers” are a tougher-than-most, rugged, resilient workforce that take difficult challenges head-on and rise to meet them with our utmost focus and determination. Tough times don’t last long, but tough Letter Carriers do. We are accomplishing our delivery tasks during some critical, unknown times because Covid-19 is a highly contagious virus. Thus, by continuously walking our routes, we are exposing ourselves to people who may already be infected with this coronavirus, and who don’t even know it. Although some people seem to be immune, they can still carry and transmit this fatal virus, dubbed the “invisible killer”.

Please take care of yourselves because everywhere people are suffering from mental arid emotional distress, anxiety,

depression, stress and nervousness during these discouraging disturbing and unsettling times like we have never seen nor experienced before. We are all uncertain about our futures and just trying to figure out what will come next. It seems as though each day brings some new developments in our updates of information on this tragic, grim and fatal coronavirus epidemic. No one is totally safe from contracting Covid-19; so, we are all certainly going through this deadly, world-wide pandemic together and united. We will somehow get through this national medical emergency and countrywide shutdown of most businesses.

Congratulations for persevering and working non-stop as essential personnel to faithfully serve the American population. ***Please try your best to protect your health during this virus crisis.*** Our thoughts and prayers go out to your entire families that everyone avoids or quickly recovers from this global pandemic and maintains both their physical and mental health until there is a return to some sort of normalcy in our lives. We ALL must learn how to adjust and adapt to our new guidelines to avoid contracting this deadly Covid-19.

Therefore, please continue to wash your hands frequently! Wear your PPE, masks and gloves when appropriate — and ***ALWAYS*** be cognizant of proper social distancing. Also, we all need to heed the advice of our highest ranking physicians who specialize in diseases and viruses and how to survive and withstand them interfering with our normal lives.

As Letter Carriers, we place ourselves in harm’s way day after day. I am proud to work side-by-side with such a rugged, dedicated and trustworthy workforce. Yes, I proudly wear my blue-striped pants!! And, lastly, thank you and kudos to all of my fellow nationwide “blue stripers” for overcoming these dangerous and challenging times while continuing to “deliver” for all Americans. ***JOB WELL DONE NOBLE MAILBAGGERS!!*** I commend you and salute your everyday superior and heroic efforts!!

P.S Personally, this 60+ year-old Carrier returned to our honorable profession to establish a new “3-year high”, NOT to work for 3 years, then die. So, I pray that God may bless us all with good health and safety during these strainful, draining and trying times like our planet has never experienced at such a deadly rate before. AMEN.

Article courtesy of theTewksbury, Massachusetts
June 2020 Mass Northeast Merged Branch 25 WAKE UP!

NALC branches improvise to hold meetings during COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many new challenges for carriers. Among them is how branches can hold meetings, whether of their executive boards, with shop stewards or even for the general membership.

That was the question facing New Jersey Merged Branch 38 President **Michael O’Neill**. Some answers were delivered by his grown daughter, who lives with him and who, as a teacher, had to learn new ways of reaching her students. One of the tools her school used was Zoom, an online video teleconferencing service that has been widely used during the pandemic.

“You have all these kids on the screen at the same time,” he said. So, he asked her, “How do you do it?”

She taught him, and he started doing staff meetings among the six full-time officers of his branch as well as the slightly larger executive board.

The branch canceled its April and May in-person general meetings, and

while it doesn’t traditionally hold meetings in the summer, there was some branch business that needed to be dealt with, including a merger and some changes to branch bylaws.

So they tried Zoom for a full membership meeting. O’Neill was pleased that the meeting drew 114 attendees.

“I was really nervous,” O’Neill said. But he started the meeting with everyone muted, and the software had tools that helped the meeting run smoothly. He was able to share his computer screen, which showed the bylaws changes and the merger resolutions. Attendees could push a button to raise their hands, and a polling tool helped keep track of votes. “We got our votes and we got a great, great response from it,” he said.

Because the branch was still learning the system, he told his members that if they had any questions, they should give him a traditional phone call at a separate time.

Branch 38 hasn’t used it just for member meetings. O’Neill recently

used Zoom for a labor-management meeting in one of the small offices. With 65 stations in the branch, and some of them quite small, the teleconferencing system has proved helpful for certain aspects of union work.

One of the country’s first confirmed cases of COVID-19 occurred in New Rochelle, NY. Hudson Valley Merged, NY Branch 137 President **Joe DeStefano** and other branch leaders were on their way back from regional training in New Jersey when they learned of the case, which meant that they couldn’t hold in-person meetings.

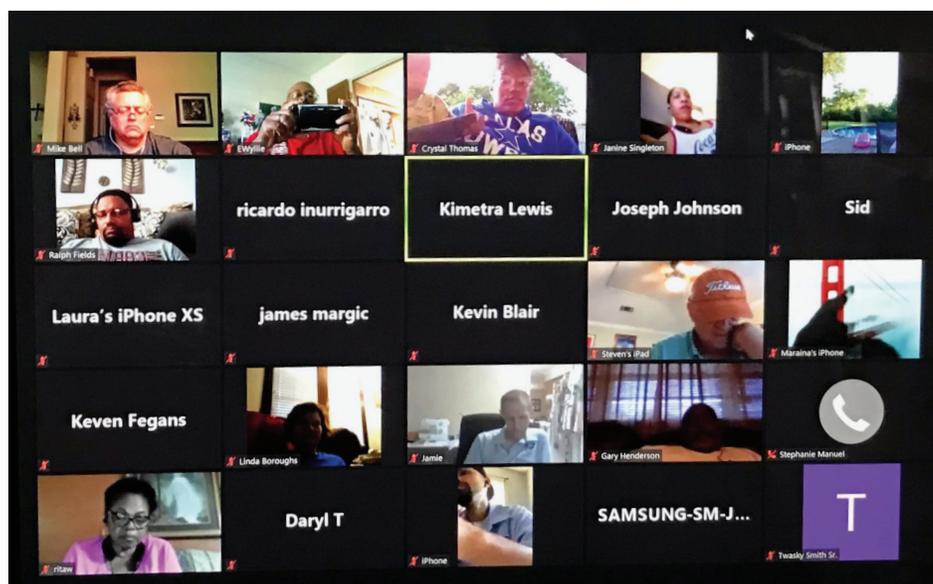
As DeStefano recounted, “Right away we were asking ourselves, ‘How are we going to communicate with our members?’ ”

Friends outside of the Postal Service recommended Zoom as the service to use. DeStefano decided to use the free trial to test it out with a couple of people from the branch and quickly, he says, “we saw how it could be beneficial.”

The branch has 63 offices and 1,300 members, but with a limit of 100 attendees on the Zoom meeting, the leaders had to be creative. “What we decided to do was invite shop stewards, alternate stewards and safety personnel, whoever can make whatever meeting, to come on the meeting and we will get the information out to the offices that way,” DeStefano said. “During a pandemic, it was really important for us to do that because we were getting daily information.”

DeStefano also participated in video teleconferences with another service called Webex, often with district managers. He would take that information to his branch’s Zoom meetings and return with updated information for the district meetings the next day.

A Dallas Branch 132 meeting held via Zoom



NALC President Fredric Rolando has attended some branch meetings held remotely during the pandemic.

“During the height of this pandemic, it was working tremendously for us,” he said.

Though the coronavirus information took precedence, the branch leaders decided to look for information on other topics that they could get out through the new tool. They invited Region 15 National Business Agent Larry Cirelli to speak one week, and after that was a success, they asked NALC President Fredric Rolando to attend.

“He came on,” DeStefano said. “He spent a little over two hours with our carriers, which was great because we had a lot of people who have never been exposed to national officers. Really, it’s put a spark into the whole branch.”

NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe attended the next week. “People were able to directly ask him a question and have a conversation,” DeStefano said. The branch has since invited its congressional representatives, as well as the district manager.

“[Members] got to see the aspect of what I’m dealing with at the district. And they got to put some of their concerns out there,” he said. “And for the district manager, it was good for him, too, because if he hears me making all the complaints, it becomes white noise after a while. But now he got to see it from the people. And now when he goes into offices, people go up to him and say they saw him on the Zoom meeting and now [they have] someone [they feel] comfortable talking to.”

Lincoln, NE Branch 8 has been using Zoom for branch meetings as well. “It’s worked fine,” Branch President **Sion Odom** said. “We still hold voice votes. We still do everything like we normally do. We’re just doing it on the app.”

zoom

Kenneth Montgomery's Zoom Meeting - Shared screen with speaker view



While Odom simply gives the login information to his stewards to get the information out to active members, the branch has been mailing the information to retirees or members who are harder to reach.

One of the challenges for branches using the technology is how to make it easy for people to ask questions without overwhelming the branch leaders running the new technology. For Branch 8, Odom has the sergeant-at-arms watch for people who push a button to raise their hand at the meeting. The sergeant-at-arms will get the full question in the chat and let Odom know that there’s a question.

Members seem to have responded positively to the new approach. “We’ve actually had numbers that I haven’t seen at regular meetings,” Odom said. “We have a couple of towns that are about 25 minutes or an hour away. So we’ve had a few people join us from there.”

In addition, Branch 8 has used the tool for a special city carrier assistant meeting with only the branch president and vice president. “They could ask questions and then we can give them answers.”

The branch is thinking of continuing using the technology in some capacity

even after in-person meetings can once again be held.

Rochester, NY Branch 210 has held meetings on Zoom, too. The stewards in each station post a notice on the bulletin board about the meeting. Members then email Branch 210 President **Kenny Montgomery** to obtain the link and password to attend.

“The meeting progresses normally with motions and votes of those in attendance as long as there is a quorum,” Montgomery said. The secretary takes attendance and anonymous attendees are not allowed.

As of June 4, the branch had held three meetings and a special legislative meeting using Zoom. Montgomery says he likes the tools the system has.

“The nice part about Zoom is you can set up the account with everyone muted when they enter the room and it allows them to unmute themselves when needed,” he said. “Also, you can share documents on screen, like financial reports.”

The only problem he reported was the occasional member with a bad connection who could not be heard. But the benefits have outweighed the problems, as using this tool has allowed the branch to host Region 11 NBA Mark

Continued on next page...

Camilli and President Rolando on the teleconference.

Not everyone wants to use video, so Dayton, OH Branch 182 President **John Oross** decided to use teleconferencing for some special town hall-style question-and-answer sessions. "It was free and easy to use," Oross explained of the decision.

The meeting was well attended, with 140 people, and it went well, he said. "It was just giving them an update on everything that's going on."

To enhance the experience using technology, he asks people to text him questions they have and then he reads them aloud, rather than having a lot of voices on the line at one time.

He's used the system for steward meetings as well, starting sometime around April, and though it's worked fine, he still is deciding how the branch will use it in the future. "I'm a dinosaur. I'm the old kind of guy, the

old-school union man," Oross said. "But I realized in the comments [I heard] after, that a lot of the new carriers like it."

With the branch starting to open up and hold meetings with social distancing, he plans to try an in-person meeting at 6:30 p.m. with a follow-up teleconference at 8 p.m., where he'll recap the meeting for those who did not attend.

For those who are thinking of using a system like Zoom, both Branch 8 President Odom and Branch 38 President O'Neill recommended watching instructional videos and holding some practice meetings. "I would normally be afraid of [something like this]," O'Neill said. "But once you get into it, it's not that hard at all."

Branch 137 President DeStefano advised taking baby steps. "I tried jumping into certain things too fast, like I tried to do a PowerPoint presentation.

Yeah, I had some technical difficulties. It's still a learning process. We've been doing it for a couple months and I learn something new every week," he said.

Another problem can be what is heard by members. On one meeting, they could hear an attendee using the bathroom. "It's an adventure each week," DeStefano said, laughing.

All of those interviewed said that using technology to hold these meetings at a time when people cannot gather because of pandemic-related social-distancing requirements has been a benefit for their members.

"If we didn't have it, I don't know what we'd be doing right now," O'Neill said, "because I'm trying to keep as many of our people out of our office building as possible."

"Hopefully we won't have to do [this] in September," he said of using Zoom for branch meetings in the fall. "But we're prepared for it." **PR**

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

NALC launches Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive



LETTER CARRIERS' DONOR DRIVE

The Postal Record July 2020

For the last 27 years, the National Association of Letter Carriers has been proud to hold the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, the nation's largest one-day food drive, on the second Saturday in May.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NALC wasn't able to safely collect and distribute food in May this year. However, the union will schedule the 28th annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive when it is safe to do so.

"In the meantime, the need for food assistance is more urgent than ever, and we want to give everyone the opportunity to continue to help meet that need," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Anyone can go to nalc.org/food to find a list of food banks in any state. From there, you can pick a food bank in your community, click the link and make a donation. It's that easy.

"The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is a drive with a single mission—to feed the hungry in America, and as always, with your help, we will," President Rolando said.

Food drive coordinators can find resources to help them raise awareness about the donor drive in their local communities on the NALC website. **PR**

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

from the editor-guy

The graphic to the right caught my attention after reading the alternate meeting format info in the July 2020 *Postal Record*.

Fred Woodley kindly responded to a series of queries: What kind of attendance did you have? and was this about normal? Was it frustrating? Would you folks do it again? How did you work out taking attendance and how did it work out to expect Stewards to attend? I see that your meeting was at 20:00. Is that the normal time? Our pre-Covid meetings were at 19:00.

BASIL ZUNIGA

Branch Meetings ARE important!

By Fred Woodley,
NALC Branch 385 Editor

The meeting went really well. It took about half as long as a normal meeting and our President did the majority of the talking, simply updating the membership on the crucial things we had going on. We cut out the majority of the reports and the overall meeting took about 30 minutes.

We used this to broadcast:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B0053H1WAC?psc=1&ref=ppx_pop_mob_b_asin_image

With this microphone:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B07T9ZPLYX?psc=1&ref=ppx_pop_mob_b_asin_title

Sound quality was great and clear. But you will need to test the frequency before you decide which station to broadcast on. If there's an actual radio station in your area that conflicts with 96.3, it might not be a clear station for you to use.

Have two people talk on their cell phones while you're testing, and the person inside the union office talk into the microphone while their cell phone is muted, to see if the person in their car can hear them well on a particular frequency. If it sounds like crap, unmute the phone and tell the person in the car to switch stations until you find one that sounds clear.

NALC Branch 385

* * * SPECIAL NOTICE * * *

Due to the COVID-19 virus, we're still unable to have our typical union meetings. We will, however, be having a very informal meeting just to keep the lines of communication open among our membership. This meeting will be different than most, because everyone who attends will be required to park their car in our office parking lot in the Brandywine Plaza and attendees will stay in their cars while the branch executive board will be broadcasting over FM radio. This meeting will be very informal and will not follow our usual meeting structure. Attendance will still be taken, and stewards are expected to attend.



8:00pm on 07/01/2020

@

**NALC Branch 385
2959 Canfield Rd., Suite 11
Youngstown, OH 44511**

**Park in the parking lot and
tune your radio to frequency 96.3 FM.**

This shamelessly "lifted" from the NALC Branch 385 July 2020 RELAY

Then tell your members to use that one.

In order to social distance, have your members stay in their cars and send the sergeant-at-arms around with a notepad and have the sergeant-at-arms write down the names of people in attendance, so no one else is touching the notepad or pen. (No spread of COVID-19.)

Attendance was about 2/3 of normal. Still a decent turnout and an opportunity to get important messages out. If you wanted, you could even open questions at the end, have people call the branch office phone and repeat their question over the radio. The questions would then be answered. Optional, of course.

Glad to hear from you man. Hope you're doing well.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

By David Norton, NALC Branch 82 President

A couple people have suggested that we hold General Membership Meetings over Zoom. Right now we are not entertaining this option.

First, we have 2000 members, and getting each one of them a Zoom meeting password would pose difficult. Also,

voting over Zoom is very cumbersome, especially for the number of members that we normally have at a meeting.

It is fine if it is with a small group, but it gets challenging the more people you have.

This is a portion of an article originally published in the July 2020 Portland, Oregon Branch 82 *B-Mike*

Furthermore, there are many members that may not have access to the technology necessary to take part in a meeting over the internet or the knowledge to do so. I don't want to discriminate against those members.

I am having regular check-ins over Zoom with station shop stewards.

This is how our Branch 82 is getting information disseminated down to the workroom floor.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

As the months go by we continue to deal with a pandemic that is unprecedented in our lifetimes. Chances are we still have a way to go before we can go back to the lives we knew prior to the onset of Covid- 19.

Months or a year or so from now when we look back at this time, I hope that all can look back and say that collectively we did the best we could under circumstances that were a challenge to all of us.

The pandemic has affected all aspects of our work lives and our personal lives. In our personal lives' carriers have had to keep distance from close friends and relatives. Unfortunately some Carriers have lost parents to Covid and were unable to be with their loved ones at their time of passing and were unable to receive friends and relatives at any type of service honoring their loved ones.

Many now see parents, or grandparents or grandchildren on Zoom, which does not allow for an embrace or a touch. Our younger parents are dealing with kids at home who now have to learn remotely and have to deal with all of the challenges that come with that. Also many of these parents are struggling day to day to maintain childcare for their children. We also have parents whose children are graduating and are unable to attend a graduation that culminated 12 years of schooling or 2,4 or more years of college.

We also have a number of Carriers who live with family members who are on the front lines of the pandemic, from medical staff, first responders, grocery workers, pharmacy, nursing homes and others who have to not only worry about their loved ones going to work but have to take extra precautions in the event that someone potentially brings the virus home.

We also have our Retirees who — because of their age — can be especially susceptible to the virus and must take extra care in order to social distance; and, as a result, lose that personal touch

By Paul Knarr, NALC Branch 51 President
that can be so important.

As I previously stated, when we look back I believe many of us will be able to say, ***"I rose to the challenge and made the best I could of a bad situation."***

While I don't hear all the stories, I do marvel at the resilience of our members in dealing with so many challenges!

You are arranging drive-by birthday and graduation parties; visiting elderly parents by talking to them through windows while standing outside; doing the best you can with math problems that you struggled with back when you were in school; changing out of uniforms in garages and hallways in order to not bring any potential virus into your home; learning how to ZOOM; transporting kids to whatever available sitter or sitters you have; and — EACH DAY — getting up, putting one foot in front of the other and doing what is necessary to get through the day.

For anyone that finds this all overwhelming, please remember that the Postal Service provides you with the opportunity to take advantage of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Your first contact with EAP can be on the clock and all you need to do is contact 1800 EAP 4-YOU.

This is a confidential program, and I do know a number of Carriers who have told me in the past that they have taken advantage of the program and many have found it helpful.

YOU have risen to the challenge in your home life; but, what I would like to do is highlight a number of ways that through this pandemic you have raised the bar at the Post Office.

Article courtesy of the Fall River, Massachusetts
June 2020 NALC Branch 51 *COURIER*

Crisis Fatigue

That's the new buzz phrase going around.

As we start to reopen things and try to get back to some semblance of “normal”, the USPS wasted no time getting back to doing morning counts and 3999's.

Remember that a 3999 is a one day thing, and it may or may not accurately reflect a “normal” day on your route.

Management likes to try to tell you that they can hold you to that 99, but that isn't correct. Every day is different because of all the variables in the day of a Letter Carrier!

Also, considering the drop in volume due to the pandemic I don't know how management expects to get reliable data from a 99 at this point. Hopefully, as things reopen, we will return to normal volumes, but right now we have no way of knowing what the long-term effects will be.

A 3996 *and* a 2 p.m. phone call are your tools to communicate to management the reality of your day. Use them!

If you get a morning count or a 99 be sure that management is still following social distancing and current guidelines as they resume these activities! No one should be in your vehicle with you or within six feet of you.

I know that the mask issue is controversial. But, it is still required as of the writing of this article. So, *please* continue to wear your mask when you are in the building — if not for yourself then for everyone else.

The person next to you may have a very strong opinion as to why they would want you to have a mask on.

Not everyone's situation is the same. There are co-workers living with loved ones that are very vulnerable. On the flip side, someone not wearing a mask obviously has a valid reason for not wearing one.

Be smart and be careful and be respectful of the person who may have a different opinion of the COVID-19 situation.

By Dave Sturm,
NALC Branch 148 President

Hopefully, we are through the worst of this. My daily teleconference had previously been reduced to 3 days a week and now to just 2 days a week. This is a clear signal that the COVID-19 situation has hopefully, as of this date, slowed down.

Staffing has been an issue with some Carriers still off due to COVID-19 and a lot of conversions. Help is on the way as several will be hired in the month of June. We still have more conversions coming with a couple retirements and transfers.

A right-hand drive Mercedes Benz van will soon be showing up at stations in Akron, but don't expect them to replace your LLV. They are slated for light volume park and loop routes. (Don't ask me to explain that one to you!)

A second round of stimulus is expected, possibly by the end of July.

We asked everyone to consider contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. I know there were several Carriers who said that they were going to sign up. Have YOU done that? If not, you need to as soon as possible! The USPS needs to be in this next stimulus package.

At the national level we are trying to get the USPS in this stimulus and get us qualified for hazard pay. Unfortunately, when it comes to legislation, money talks. If you want that hazard pay and you want the USPS to survive and continue provide a living wage to you and your family, you really should be willing to put your hard-earned money to work for you. Sign up now!

We also have a new Postmaster General that we may need to worry about, considering who appointed him.

We'll see if we can get our meeting in this month depending on the current restrictions.

Article courtesy of the
Akron, Ohio NALC Branch 148
July 2020 RUBBER CITY LETTER CARRIER

The Fine Print

By John Pffifner,
NALC Branch 373 V.P.

There are two 2-letter words that best describe what Unionism is all about. The two words are “WE” and “US”.

“WE” and “US” are collective words that best describe what collective bargaining is all about. Collective bargaining is when “WE” become Union members to join in the fight to bargain for working rights, pay and benefits that, in turn, benefit all of “US”. When “WE” watch out for our fellow members, especially the newer CCAs, all of “US” become stronger by working together.

As Stewards and Branch Officers, the actions “WE” take are for the welfare of all of “US”. Whether “WE” file grievances for individuals or as class actions, the result is that all of “US” as a branch become stronger. Management is dealing with not just branch stewards or officers, it is dealing with the NALC, which is all of “US”. And because a few of “US” are willing to step forward to take on the roles of Branch Representatives, and work hard at it, “WE” have credibility with the Dispute Resolution Team. Thus, “WE” lose few grievances. That has made all of “US” — as a Branch — a strong force to reckon with.

But unionism is not just a few of “US” filing grievances. There are all kinds of big and little actions that “WE”, as members, can take that can benefit all of “US”. For instance, a few of “US” organize and put on picnics and winter dinners that “WE” can all enjoy. And when you show up at these events and share your camaraderie with all of “US”, “WE” all have fun because of it.

Thank you to the members who are willing to volunteer to organize a retirement party for morning break when one of “US” is fortunate to at-last retire! Thank you to the members that pass around get-well cards or sympathy cards, that let those of “US” who are hurting know that “WE” are thinking of them! “WE” appreciate your kindness!

All these big and small actions that “WE” do, builds unionism amongst “US”. When “WE” practice unionism, “WE” become Brothers and Sisters in a common cause. The Brothers and Sisters who came before “US”, built a union that all of US right now enjoy and benefit from and should be proud to be a part of. It is our duty to build on that. What they gave “US”, We should pay forward to our future brothers and sisters. What “WE” do, “WE” should do for all of “US”. By pitching in and helping “US”, “WE” all can have a better, stronger union.

Article courtesy of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa
NALC Branch 373 July 2020 Eastern Iowa Reporter

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 2020

By Phillip Capuano, President
NALC Branch 737

I would like to thank each and every Letter Carrier at this time for working through the COVID-19 pandemic. **YOU** are an essential worker delivering the mail each day through this pandemic.

I think we can all agree this is one of the worst health crisis we have ever seen. COVID-19 pandemic has made an impact on all of our lives. I think the Post Office has done a great job in keeping employees informed through mandatory stand ups on the crisis. This office emails all the Shop Stewards every stand up concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. The Stewards are informed to make sure management conducts these mandatory stand ups to keep the employees informed of the current events. Through communication with each Shop Steward they have been advised to make sure each office has enough supplies, gloves, masks and especially hand sanitizer and also disinfectant sprays to clean the postal vehicles or the Carrier cases.

As I did my monthly station visits, I saw a lot of Carriers wearing a mask and also saw some that didn't wear a mask as well. But the majority of the Letter Carriers wore a mask while they were working in the office casing their routes and while delivering the mail on the streets. In some of these offices it is difficult to practice social distancing especially when management has removed the wing case from each route.

Through our weekly telecom with the Santa Ana District, management has kept all the unions informed of the current events and any employees who tested positive of COVID-19, we also discuss making sure each office has enough supplies to protect themselves. The Post Office does not share the names or the medical condition of any employee including ones testing positive. What they do is notify the employees in that work location and do a mandatory stand up each time this would occur and completely sanitize the work location.

Within NALC Branch 737 no Letter Carrier has tested positive. We have had situations where the Letter Carrier — by the advice of their treating physician — was recommended to self-quarantine for 14 days if they felt they might have come in contact with any employee that tested positive for COVID-19. To date we have had only 2 managers within NALC Branch 737 testing positive for COVID-19.

During this COVID-19 pandemic we had employees who exercised their rights under the USPS FFCRA leave. The leave taken at this time is for child care, one who might have an underlying medical condition or one taking care of a family member with an underlying medical condition. Management cannot discipline any Letter Carrier who has used any leave related to the qualifying reasons under the USPS FFCRA rules.

With Letter Carriers using the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for the qualifying reasons, certain offices or stations become short staffed. ***In these offices where they are short staffed Letter Carriers have been working until 10:00 pm at night.***

Just. Doing. Her. Job.

By Lynn Kroll, Vice-President
NALC Branch 2555

Hey everybody! What a train wreck of a year so far, hey? I've decided that my newsletter article is not going to be about everything that we've all been dealing with, day in and day out. ***Instead, I'm choosing to write about a fellow Carrier we lost back in April to gun violence and general stupidity.***

Angela Summers.

A 45 year old CCA out of Indianapolis, IN with just under two years of service under her belt. Mother of a 14 year old daughter. Active Union member and Union representative. Loved her job and worked her ass off. Shot dead by a 21 year old "just trying to scare her" into delivering his household's mail. Actually, all he wanted was his \$1200 Covid check. A damned check!

Sister Summers had been going round and round with this family for months over the family dog that ran free in the yard. Repeatedly asking family members to put the dog inside so she could deliver the mail. She was repeatedly berated, name called and threatened. She had sprayed the dog twice and was threatened with-an (:`a** beating" if she did it again. And that her "white bitch a**" **WILL** start delivering their mail. **THIS** coming from the mother of the household.

Sister Summers did what we are all supposed to do. Three warnings in regards to the dog ended up getting their mail curtailed and held for pickup, **AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN!**

Angela Summers. **Doing. Her. Job.**

Unbeknownst to her when she headed to the street that day in April, she would not make it home to her 14 year old daughter. Because, **THAT DAY** she walked right on by curtailing delivery to this problem address. She wasn't

Even though the mail volume has decreased significantly due to the State of California being closed and the nation being closed parcel posts have increased by over 90%. If there is a violation in the office of improper mandating or a violation of the 12/60 rule, grievances have been filed in each office by the Steward.

A very special thank you to Ed Ruiz, Manager of the Santa Ana District for acknowledging Letter Carriers dedication and their passion to serve their customers clearing making Letter Carriers a "Postal Hero".

The interest arbitration dates have been confirmed for September through November, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was postponed when it was originally scheduled for May, June and July, 2020. Our current Collective Bargaining Agreement remains in effect at this time.

Route inspections have also been delayed up until at least September.

Also, our annual NALC Food Drive was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since there was no Food Drive this year, the Executive Board recommended and approved to make donations to two local food banks in Orange County for families in need during this time.

The National Convention which was to be held in Hawaii during the month of August was also cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As most of us are aware, PMG Megan Brennan recently resigned

as Postmaster General and the new Postmaster General is Louis Dejoy. Both Postmaster General Louis Dejoy and NALC President Fred Rolando will be committed to working in good faith, building a relationship and a future vision for the USPS.

The Heroes Act 2 which would have supplied the financial aid needed to the postal service and the much talked about hazard pay for Letter Carriers passed through the House of Representatives.

Due to the nationwide protests and demonstrations the Companion Bill has been stalled in the Senate. At this time, any relief for the USPS in the Senate will probably not take place until July, 2020. National has advised us to continue our efforts to contact our representatives and urge them to pass the relief that is much needed for the USPS.

March 10, 2020 was the last NALC Branch meeting at the union office. Based on the state laws and CDC guidelines it would have been difficult to maintain any social distancing at the union office. During the months of April, May and June, 2020 the Executive Board met through communication by email or phone concerning NALC Branch 737 recommendations. The Executive Board reviewed the recommendations and were accepted and approved.

In closing, once again thank you for working through the COVID-19 pandemic. Letter Carriers are truly essential workers.

Please stay safe and healthy at all times.

Abridged article courtesy of the Santa Ana, California July/August/September 2020 NALC Branch 737 VOICE

even in possession of their mail on a daily basis at this point. But that day, a 21 year old punk followed her down the sidewalk demanding his mail. Wanting that stupid \$1200 Covid check. Harassing her as she's delivering on the neighbor's porch. In her face, yelling about his check....she pepper sprays him in the face. Out comes a handgun from the waistband of his pants and he shoots her in the chest and flees.

Angela Summers.

She gets that customer's attention by pounding on her door. The lady finds her bleeding, hyperventilating and crying for her daughter. The woman holds her in her arms until the paramedics arrive.

Sister Summers dies later at the hospital.

Angela Summers. 45 years old.

14 year old daughter. **Doing. Her. Damned. Job.** And dying over a \$1200 check at the hands of a 21-year old whose family chose not to be proper pet owners. Who chose to be shi**y people. Who chose to sit there and watch him kill this woman.

I cried when this story first broke and I cry now as I write this. This can happen **ANY DAY.** To **ANY** of **US.** **ANYWHERE** in this country! Senseless, shameful, disrespectful people will continue to exist in this world, and I've grown so very tired of it. It hurts me to see someone lose their life and their family, lose them because they were just doing their job.

Rest easy, Angela.

This info is courtesy of the East Lansing, Michigan Branch 2555 SPARTAN VIEWS. Donations to assist Sister Summers' daughter can be sent to: NALC Branch 39, c/o Katrina Davis Trust Fund, 2211 E. 54 St., Indianapolis, Indiana 46220. Please make a decision to be generous! Angela Summers was just doing her Letter Carrier job...

“Out there”



12/60 AND YOU

By Becky Stockman, V.P.
NALC Branch 3

The covid virus does not absolve management from maintaining the 12/60 rules.

Just about every day since Covid, we have been working short. Now prime time has started, the weather is hotter and we are working even longer. Days off are few and far between.

If you are going over 12 hours during the day or over 60 hours in the week, you need to see your Steward to file a grievance. You deserve extra compensation for the contract violation.

We need the grievances filed so we can follow up. This work schedule doesn't seem like it is going to let up. Management may have the right to manage *but we have the right to grieve when they break the contract!* Know your rights!

JCAM states under Article 3:

While postal management has the right to “manage” the Postal Service, it must act in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, contract provisions, arbitration awards, letters of agreement, and memoranda. Consequently,

many of the management rights enumerated in Article 3 are limited by negotiated contract provisions.

Additionally, the following decision also applies:

(M-00859)

The parties agree that with the exception of December, full-time employees are prohibited from working more than 12 hours in a single work day or 60 hours within a service week. In those limited instances where this provision is or has been violated and a timely grievance filed, full-time employees will be compensated at an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate for those hours worked beyond the 12 or 60 hour limitation. The employment of this remedy shall not be construed as an agreement by the parties that the Employer may exceed the 12 and 60 hour limitation with impunity.

As a means of facilitating the foregoing, the parties agree that excluding December, once a full-time employee reaches 20 hours of overtime within a service week, the employee is no longer available for any additional overtime work. Furthermore, the employee's tour of duty shall be terminated once he or she reaches the 60th hour of work.

For the CCA's out there, the rules are a little different. You should not be working more than 12 hours (including lunch) every day.

While there is nothing in the contract limiting the weekly hours a CCA can work, Buffalo management is really big on CCA retention right now, so do not feel shy to ask for time off when you need it.

Exhaustion is a damn good safety reason to tell them you need a day off.

For going over 11.5 hours in a day, see your Steward and get a grievance filed within 14 days of the incident. (M-01548)

CCAs are covered by Section 432.32 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, which states: Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. Postmasters, Postal Inspectors, and exempt employees are excluded from these provisions.

Stay safe, healthy, drink tons of water and remember **YOU** are in charge of **YOUR** safety!

Article courtesy of the Buffalo, New York June 2020
NALC Branch 3 **BUZZ**

Been Called to the Manager's Office?

By Mark Myers, NALC Branch 79 Secretary-Treasurer

Almost every Letter Carrier, at some point in their career, has been ushered into the manager's office for some reason or another.

All too rarely is it to receive recognition or praise for a job well done. Most of the time it's to be confronted about some failing — real or imagined — that management intends to hold the employee responsible for.

Sometimes these "investigations" border on the ridiculous.

In one case, a Postal vehicle had a visible scratch on a side panel and the Regular Carrier was questioned. The Regular stated he didn't do it, but that it could have happened in a parking garage on the route where there were poles next to a loading dock. Next thing you know, he's issued a Letter of Warning for Unsafe Driving. Management didn't know when it happened, where it happened or even who may have been operating the vehicle.

In another, a parked LLV's mirror was damaged by a passing driver; management said they were too busy to come out to the scene, and asked the Carrier take some pictures of the damage?

Management then used the pictures the Carrier took to issue him a Letter of Warn-

ing for an unsafe act. Was he investigating himself?

In yet another, a Carrier was ordered not to put his name on the opt sheet. (Yes... Really.) When he did, he was issued a Letter of Warning for "Failure to Follow Instructions". Maybe if management had even bothered to investigate, they would have discovered the Carrier had the RIGHT to opt.

Clearly, there was no merit or just cause to issue any of these disciplines.

If you are called to the manager's office, and you are asked questions, and you feel you may be subject to discipline, **this** is the threshold for you to request your Shop Steward.

Once your request has been voiced (if this is indeed an Investigative Interview), they are legally required to provide a Steward **or wait until one is available**. If management discourages your request, let them know that you are willing to cooperate, but that a steward must be present.

Remember that you must make the request for the Steward. In my experience, most supervisors would come get me whenever an Investigative Interview was being held, so that the steward was there from the outset.

Not every visit to a manager's office may require the Steward's presence. If they are simply giving you instructions or information, this probably doesn't meet the threshold.

Once the Steward is present, he or she should be given a copy of management's questions. The Steward should assure that the Carrier understands what is being asked and is given adequate time to respond.

If management refuses to provide the interview questions, the Steward should carefully write each question and repeat the question to the Carrier, so that the interview is properly documented.

The Steward should be alert to management's attempts to include leading questions implying guilt, despite whether the Carrier answers yes or no (such as "Have you stopped mis-delivering Mr. Johnson's mail?") Questions of this nature should be rephrased or dropped altogether.

Also, the Steward is permitted to take time-outs to privately answer any questions the Carrier may have.

Your legal right to have your Shop Steward represent you is incorporated in the National Agreement under Article 17 Steward's Rights and Article 19 through the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act.

Courtesy of the June 2020 Seattle, Washington NALC Branch 79 *Seventy-Niner*

I Know that "Safety" Gets Old. But, so do Those Who Practice It...

By Randy Wise, NALC Branch 791 Carrier at Everett Main

Through all of my years of service with USPS (20+), I can tell you that the phrase "Safety 1st" has earned itself multiple definitions by our beloved management team, we in the workforce and by our customers. I will leave our customers out of the remainder of this but will thank them for their business.

Management's #1 goal is to get us on the street, back to the office and off the clock ASAP. **SAFETY?** Well, if we can... Management will harass, intimidate and coerce Carriers to commit to a time that will benefit Management. **SAFETY?** Well if we can... Management will call or send text messages to Carriers' personal cell phones or send messages to the scanner with instructions while the Carrier is on the route. **SAFE** for us to do that? Well... Management continues to disregard the practice of social distancing, not wearing a mask or gloves. **Carriers and Clerks: We just want to get through the day...and OUR SAFETY is not just "if we can"...**

Thanks for reading. If you have a safety comment, question or suggestion, ask and I will respond. Reach me at the following email address: chkrazr99@gmail.com. **I KNOW THAT SAFETY GETS OLD. BUT, SO DO THOSE WHO PRACTICE IT...**

Courtesy of the Volume 119 Issue 7 *Monthly Report* published by Everett, Washington NALC Branch 791

Healthy Eating

By John Wood, HBP/MBA Officer
NALC Branch 2008

I don't know if it is due to my recent retirement from the Postal Service, or the coronavirus stay at home directive, but I have gained weight. My clothes are tighter, and I don't want to have to go out and buy larger sizes. With my wife Linda's encouragement, we are going to start eating healthier. I went on the Cigna website and got this article.

How do you get started on healthy eating?

Healthy eating starts with learning new ways to eat, such as adding more fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and cutting back on foods that have a lot of fat, salt, and sugar. A change to healthier eating also includes learning about balance, variety, and moderation.

Aim for balance.

Most days, eat from each food group -- grains, protein foods, vegetables and fruits, and dairy. Listen to your body. Eat when you're hungry. Stop when you feel satisfied.

Look for variety.

Be adventurous. Choose different foods in each food group. For example, don't reach for an apple every time you choose a fruit. Eating a variety of foods each day will help you get all the nutrients you need.

Practice moderation.

Don't have too much or too little of one thing. All foods, if eaten in moderation, can be part of healthy eating. Even sweets are okay.

Why pay attention to what you eat?

Healthy eating will help you get the right balance of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. It will help you feel your best and have plenty of energy. It can help you handle stress better. Healthy eating is one of the best things you can do to prevent and control many health problems such as

Heart Disease
Type 2 Diabetis

High Blood Pressure
Some types of cancer

Is healthy eating the same as going on a diet?

Healthy eating is not a diet. It means making changes you can live with and enjoy for the rest of your life. Diets are temporary.

Because you give up so much when you diet, you may be hungry and think about food all the time. And after you stop dieting, you also may overeat to make up for what you missed.

OUT THERE



Originally published April 2004

Eating a healthy, balanced variety of foods is far more satisfying. And if you match that with more physical activity, you are more likely to get to a healthy weight -- and stay there -- than if you diet.

How do you make healthy eating a habit?

First, think about your reasons for healthier eating. Do you want to improve your health? Do you want to feel better? Are you trying to set an example for your kids? Next, think about some small changes you can make. Pick ones you can keep doing.

Don't try to change everything at once.

Set an easy goal you can reach, like having a salad and a piece of fruit each day.

Make a long-term goal, such as having one vegetarian dinner a week.

Where can you get support?

Having support from others can be a huge help. The more support you have, the easier it will be to make changes. Ask family and friends to practice healthy eating with you. Have them help you make the meals, and share healthy, delicious recipes and cooking tips.

If you need more help, talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian. Look online for groups that support healthy eating and share success stories.

Article courtesy of the Tarpon Springs, Florida June 2020
NALC Branch 2008 Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update

2020 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan
 *Hospital Pre-Certification
 Mental & Substance Precertification
 Prescription Drug Program
 CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy
 Durable Medical Equipment
"24/7 Nurse Hotline"
 CVS/CareMark Pharmacist
 Solutions for Caregivers (24/7)
 CIGNA PPO Locator Line
 CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval
 Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation)
 CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount)
 Disease Management Program
 OPM Retirement Info Center
 Federal Information Center
 Social Security Administration Info
 PostalEase Human Resources USPS
 Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)
 LabCorp Lab Services Bakersfield
Shared Services Option 5 live person
 Medicare
 Suicide Hotline
 Suicide?? Talk With Someone...

1-888-636-6252
 1-877-220-6252
 1-877-468-1016
 1-800-933-6252
 1-800-237-2767
 1-855-511-1893
1-877-220-6252
 1-888-636-6252
 1-877-468-1016
 1-877-220-6252
 1-800-668-9682
 1-866-784-8454
 1-800-558-9443
1-877-521-0244
 1-800-227-3728
 1-888-767-6738
 1-800-333-4636
 1-800-772-1213
 1-877-477-3273
 (661) 631-8520
 (661) 631-9258
1-877-477-3273
 1-800-633-4227
 1-800-784-2433
 1-800-273-8255

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan and Value Option*
 P.O. Box 18223
 Chattanooga, TN 37422-7223
 Phone: 1-855-511-1893

** Call for approvals Organ Transplants,
 DME Surgeries InPatient*

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

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

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

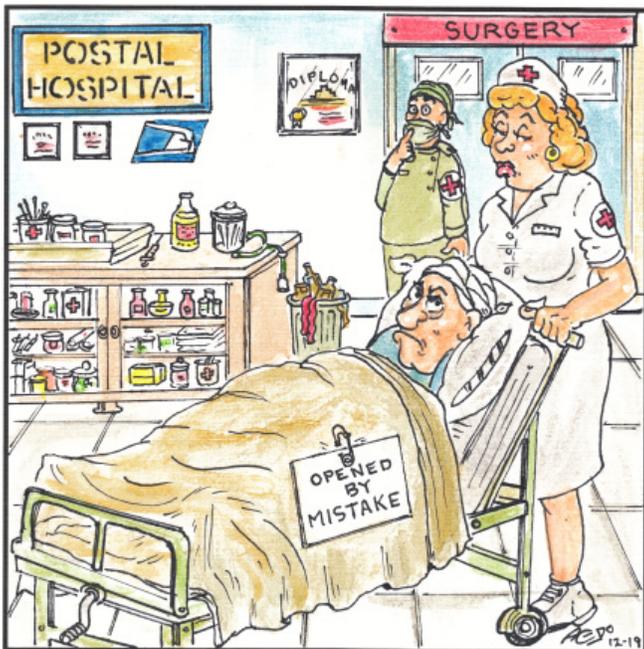
Our PPO doctors and facilities—through (OAP Network) CIGNA—save us and the Plan thousands of dollars and it is top notch care at a discount rate. You don't lose anything! You are saving money for the best care!!!

MARK RAMIREZ

NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative

(661) 204-5592

"Out tHeRe"



The NALC Consumer Driven HP and the Value Option HP can utilize this **CIGNA PPO/OAP NETWORK** or by calling 1-855-511-1893.

OPTUMHEALTH BEHAVIORIAL SOLUTIONS is also available to the Consumer Driven/Value Option. You must pre-certify.
 Call 1-877-468-1016.

We DO have a Dental Discount Program!
 Call Mark Ramirez for details...

The View from the Country Club

We are in a pandemic (in case you hadn't heard). People are getting sick and people are dying. There is nothing positive about that. However, it's not all bad. Seriously, there are some good aspects of a pandemic and sheltering in place.

A. Postal positives:

1. We have never been more popular. 94% of people in a recent bipartisan study said that the postal service is important. We are getting a lot of positive press.
2. Our parcel volume is huge. I mean HUGE! Like Christmas in June huge! Thanks to this, carriers have become very proficient in playing Tetris by loading the parcels and then they are becoming proficient at Jenga when unloading the parcels.
3. Leaving notice is easier. Why is it easier you ask? We don't have to leave notice—everyone is home! I can't remember the last time that I had to write up a left notice slip.
4. Our vehicles are squeaky clean. Every day we wipe them down. Years of dust and grime are being sanitized every morning.
5. Masks. There are some carriers who look better when their face is covered. (You know who you are!)
6. Less strain on hands. With the drop in letter and flat mail volumes, it has become much easier to hold the mail. (This is called "Making lemonade of lemons")
7. Less bumper car mornings. With the staggered start times at the Country Club we have fewer incidents of carriers bumping into other carriers with their hampers.
8. No office or street inspections! Of course we all love to have a supervisor joining us for the day (that is called sarcasm). We can't do that safely right now... so it's a plus, too.
9. Meeting customers we've never met before. Not only are people at home, we are coming by their homes at different times. It's nice to put a face to some of these names.
10. Getting to see all sorts of people out doing chalk drawings, playing catch in the street, sitting in lawn chairs in their front lawns, etc.

B. Family and society positives:

The Employee Assistance Program is governed by Article 35 of the National Agreement. EAP is jointly administered by NALC, other postal unions and USPS. It provides confidential education, referral and counseling to help employees through personal challenges of all types, including alcoholism and drug-abuse programs.

Letter Carriers seeking EAP services may contact their local union officers for information, call 800-327-4968 or go to www.eap4you.com.

1. No mall trips. I'm sure this is a negative to some, so I'll tread carefully. I'm not a big fan of the "let's go shopping" request. I mean, sure Menards or Marshall hardware, but not any place that has the words clothing, candles, or boutique associated with it. Haven't had a Mall trip in a few months now...to me, a positive.

By Dave Mayou,
NALC Branch 114

2. Game night is any night. What can we do? Netflix, Prime, Hulu? Game night? Heck, why not! Or a bonfire! It's been nice to spend some time with the family.

3. Time to do all those things I said I'd do when I got some time. Cleaning out the attic. Putting those photos into albums. I've got nothing but time. (Apparently, I was lying to myself—even with time I haven't done these things.)

4. Traffic. What is that? A couple weeks ago I went to the cities to visit my wife's parents at an appropriate social distance. It was a Monday. We left south Minneapolis at 5pm to drive back to Duluth. Anyone who has ever been to the cities knows that you don't leave at the height of rush hour. The thing is, there is no rush hour. It was busy by Duluth standards, but there was definitely not anything resembling a "rush hour".

5. An appreciation for essential workers. Postal workers ARE essential. Grocery workers. Doctors and nurses. Trash collectors. Hardware stores. The list goes on. It's nice to be part of a group of employees that are keeping our communities going

6. Learning, or more honestly, relearning those things you learned back in primary school. Dad, what is the genus of snails. Well son, that is (Checks Wikipedia on the sly) Helix or gastropod of course. Learning on the fly, it's all good.

7. Books and reading. Somehow those long put-off cleaning and sorting jobs aren't getting accomplished yet those books that have been sitting on my shelf are getting read.

There is no getting around the fact that this pandemic sucks in many, many ways. Our lives are now defined by it. The thing is, it's important to try to keep things positive.

That may not always be possible. If you are having issues because of the pandemic, or because of any reasons really, as postal workers we have the resource of the Employee Assistance Program 1-800-EAP-4-YOU for help.

Article courtesy of the Duluth, Minnesota June 2020
NALC Branch 114 ZENITH BRANCH NEWS

A Letter Carriers View – Jeff Weipert, Br 4374

In my 33+ years as a Letter Carrier in Warren, I've often thought about writing an article for this publication. For better or worse, I've decided to accept the monthly invitation.

"Out there"



Originally published by Branch 782 in 1996

I would like to discuss a couple long time problem areas that have recently become astoundingly terrible.

I'm sure with all of the long hours, scanning, DPS, and parcels, it's no picnic being a CCA or Unassigned. And I'm sure the Carrier trainers in each office do a fine job; the problem is, delivery to apartments and NDCBUs like those on my route just gets worse by the day. So, to provide the service our customers deserve and reduce the work and stress of Regular Carriers, I would like to give a primer for cluster box and apartment delivery.

As Carriers, we should always follow this golden rule: **Deliver the mail as if it's your own.** Sadly, many newer employees don't consider this as an important aspect of the job. In the days before the advent of DPS, we cased everything and pulled the undeliverable mail in the office. Now, the cards we case remind us to bring back our forwards, UTFs, and vacants. Did you know you're sup-

posed to pull out the undeliverable mail before pulling down a route by reviewing the pink cards at each case? That's what's taught in Carrier Academy, so why isn't anyone doing it anymore?

In my opinion, forwarding mail is the most important part of our job. With apartment and cluster delivery, this task is much simpler, as long as the Regular is diligent in keeping the name labels neat and up-to-date. Again, the problem is, many subs don't know or care that those silly name labels are there for THEM. They **WRONGLY** deliver everything regardless of name, as if following a simple instruction is beneath them.

NEWS FLASH! People don't want mail that is not theirs. And people who've moved would like their mail forwarded. Would you like your important mail to be thrown out or opened for identity or general theft by angry or unsavory new tenants? This mail is undeliverable and should be marked and brought back and left on the case for the regular. (By the way, why can't any mail with a bad name or number be forwarded if we correct it? They always come back and I don't know why.)

Accuracy is not the only problem. There is also neatness. Unfortunately, many apartment boxes were not designed with today's mail in mind or people who rarely empty their mailboxes. Always deliver to facilitate easy delivery the next day should that box not be emptied. Keep letters facing the same direction. If they don't fit without crumpling like origami, bring them back. Deliver flats first, but only if the box is empty of letters. Take a second to remove and reinsert them after the flats. All third bundle cards and coupons go **INSIDE** the boxes, not squirreled away at the bottom of the circular bins. This lazy practice equates to throwing mail away. **IT COULD BE YOUR JOB YOU SAVE BY FOLLOWING THIS ADVICE.**

In most instances, after my route is open or I return from vacation, I have to inspect every piece in every box for misdelivered and crumpled mail. That equates to about 300 boxes if you're scoring at home. In one horrific day last year, I discovered the sub "Carrier" misdelivered all of the mail in four consecutive apartments to the adjacent buildings. I was informed by one of the tenants that this Carrier was chattering away on their headset while misdelivering nearly 100 pieces. I commend those subs that do care about proper delivery, but sadly the above travesty is closer to the norm.

With the NDCBUs, I will never understand why subs love to put letters in first and circs and flats on top, so when customers withdraw their mail, the letters fall to the ground. Please! Letters go on top! This makes it easier to inspect for mistakes, too.

I'm sure many veteran Carriers will laugh at my naïveté writing this article. And most of the offending Carriers probably won't change or care to read it. But if **JUST ONE** Carrier will put down the headset and read the labels and start caring — or one trainer will add some of this to their training — it wasn't a waste of time. Accuracy, neatness, and quality service really isn't that hard.

Courtesy of the June 2020 *FRONT LINES* published by Center Line, Michigan NALC Branch 4374

Hello Again From the Office of Your Secretary-Treasurer.

By Matt Pierce, NALC Branch 79

The recently passed *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act*, included a great many provisions meant to financially keep businesses and individuals afloat during an unprecedented freeze on the majority of American life.

The CARES Act also allows temporary loan and withdrawal options to TSP participants affected by COVID-19.

Before anyone withdraws their money early though, I want them to REALLY think about if there's no other way to get what they really need.

Trust me, I totally get it.

It's easy to focus on the present — the bills you have to pay, the things you want to buy -and assume you'll have time in the future to start saving for retirement.

As my grandfather used to say though, "The easiest time to save money is when you're earning it." The longer you wait, the tougher it will be to amass a sufficiently large nest egg.

For example, if you wait until you are 35 to start saving for retirement, you'll have to set aside \$671 a month to reach \$1 million by age 65 (assuming an 8 percent annual return after fees).

But if you start at age 25, you'll need to save just \$286 a month to hit \$1 million by the time you're 65.

The Thrift Savings Plan was designed to provide you with income after you retire.

The amount you will have in your account at retirement depends on the decisions you make — how much you contribute, how you invest, and whether you take money out of your account — BEFORE you retire.

This is why I always tell people to only borrow from your TSP as a last resort.

The 1st reason is: You'll make less money.

Many people like the fact that they can borrow the money at a low interest rate and pay themselves back with interest. But remember, money not invested is money that's not earning money. When you repay your loan, your payments (including interest) are deposited back into the traditional (non-Roth) and Roth balances of your account.

The loan interest rate you pay for the life of the loan will be the G Fund's interest rate that is in effect on the date that your Loan Agreement is generated.

If your TSP investments, such as in the Lifecycle fund earn higher rates of return than the interest rate on the loan, your TSP account will end up being smaller than it would have been if you had not borrowed from it.

THIS CAN BE A LOT MORE MONEY THAN MANY PEOPLE REALIZE.

You can figure it out yourself with the many available online compound interest or investment returns calculators. Just adjust the starting balance and the differences in rate of return.

Let's take an example of a Carrier who is contributing \$200 a month to the L2040 fund and borrows \$10,000 from their account for 5 years. They have to pay it back

at about \$170 a month, which is principle AND G fund interest and continue hopefully to contribute the \$200.

But because of the fact that the money isn't growing compounded in the fund, the difference in the fund balances after 5 years average returns is almost \$3000 dollars. \$3,000 on a \$10,000 loan is not an insignificant amount of money to lose.

IT'S CERTAINLY A LOT MORE MONEY THAN THE VERY LOW INTEREST RATE YOU PAY IT BACK AT WOULD LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE IT COSTS.

In our example, the Carrier was able to keep contributing \$200 to their TSP and make the loan payments, but if you are not able to contribute as much to the TSP because of the financial burden of your loan payments, your TSP account will not grow as quickly.

IF YOU HAVE TO REDUCE YOUR CONTRIBUTION RATE TO BELOW 5%, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE THE FULL AGENCY/SERVICE MATCH.

The next reason is that you might find yourself paying extra penalties and taxes.

If you don't have enough money to pay back your TSP loan in time, your unpaid balance will be considered a distribution. That means you'll be looking at a 10% penalty in addition to higher income taxes.

For those nearing retirement, there's a potential tax trap for those who have an outstanding loan when they retire. If you leave service with an outstanding TSP loan, **YOU MUST REPAY THE LOAN IN FULL, INCLUDING INTEREST.**

If you have not made that payment WITHIN 90 DAYS, a "taxable distribution" of the unpaid loan amount that would be taxable on withdrawal will be declared, potentially subjecting you to significant tax penalties (significant tax PENALTIES???).

A delay in repaying a loan also may affect the processing of a withdrawal, if you intend to make a withdrawal election soon after retiring.

Those who find a need for a lump-sum of money later in their working careers might want to consider taking out an age-based in-service withdrawal rather than a loan, so long as they are at least age 59 1/2.

After that age, there is no early withdrawal tax penalty for taking out an in-service withdrawal.

Until the recent law change, there had been several downsides to taking age-based withdrawals. Only one was allowed and those who took one could not take partial withdrawals after they retired but

instead had to make a decision affecting the entire account.

Those rules no longer apply. Now, up to four in-service age-based withdrawals are allowed per year and there is no limit to the number of partial withdrawals after retirement.

The final reason is that even if you borrow the money to buy a house, a TSP residential loan is not a mortgage. Therefore, the TSP loan interest payments are not tax deductible, as they might be for a mortgage or home equity loan.

Again, trust me, I know what it's like to be broke and need money, but taking money out of your TSP defeats the whole reason you put it in there in the first place — for it to grow over time.

Repeat after me:

***MY TSP IS NOT
A PIGGY BANK.***

This is why I need to have an emergency fund. So should you...

Courtesy of the June 2020 Portland, Oregon
NALC Branch 82 B-Mike

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

By Mark Beach, NALC Branch 78 V.P.

Louis Dejoy, the top fundraiser and organizer for Donald Trump, has been appointed to replace Megan Brennan as Postmaster General. Brennan (a 33-year USPS career employee) worked her way up through the ranks of the United States Postal Service and understood how we functioned.

Her replacement, Louis Dejoy has never worked for the United States Postal Service and has spent most of the last decade running supply chain and distribution centers. This is the first time in 20 years that someone from outside of the Postal Service has served in this top position.

Although not directly appointed by the President, the new Postmaster General was appointed by the current four members of the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors members are appointed by the president and normally consists of nine members.

Democrat Gerald Connolly, the House Subcommittee Chairman that oversees the Postal Service denounced the appointment, pointing out that Dejoy is a partisan donor to the President, who is in direct opposition to the USPS.

Mr. Dejoy is a huge supporter of President Trump already donating over \$360,000 dollars this year alone to his reelection campaign while donating another \$70,000 to the Republican National Party. President Trump has made it clear in the past that he wants to privatize the US Postal Service and severely weaken if not outright do away with the Postal unions all together.

This does not bode well for the future of craft employee's salaries, benefits, and retirement. Mr. Trump has vowed to "save" the Postal Service. But, at what cost will this be in terms of service to the American People and the middle-class workers of the USPS?

Whether you are a Republican or Democrat, you should be taking a deep breath and be concerned for our future.

Recently the USPS announced in a somewhat controversial service talk that all employees would be required to wear masks on the workroom floor where social distancing could not be achieved. The National Union endorsed this stance based on contractual language found in the ELM section 814.2 which states: 814.2 Responsibilities: All employees are responsible for: a. Complying with all OSHA and Postal Service safety and health regulations, procedures, and practices, including the use of approved personal protective equipment.

A few employees felt this requirement is an infringement on their civil liberties. Others may have medical issues that may prevent them from wearing a mask. These situations will be handled on a case by case basis according to the district manager.

The NALC Business Agent has informed us that wearing the PPE requested by the postal service is a condition of employment under 814.2 of the ELM and that the overall safety of the entire workforce is the motivation for supporting and endorsing this move.

Carriers that have a possible medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask are asked to contact their health care provider and have them explain the conditions to the occupational nurse.

Every Letter Carrier hopefully realizes that the appointment of Postmaster General Dejoy and the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic has the potential to greatly alter our future as Letter Carriers. I for one, would prefer to be proactive to try and shape my future rather than sit idly by and watch my good middle-class job and retirement be flushed down the drain by politics. Write a letter, make a phone call or donation to the Letter Carrier Political fund and help save your future.

Modified and/or abridged article courtesy of the Columbus, Ohio June 2020 NALC Branch 78 *Buckeye Branch Bulletin*

MBA Benefit for CCAs

By Scott Pickering, Trustee
NALC Branch 290

In this issue of the *Beast* I want to continue our exploration of benefits available to members under the NALC Mutual Benefit Association (MBA).

This article is for everyone but with a special focus on our CCA'S! That's right! I realize it can be difficult as a newer employee to not be included in certain benefits available only to career status personnel, however the MBA has created a benefit just for you: The NALC CCA Retirement Savings Plan. It is a retirement income plan designed for City Carrier Assistants.

So let's take a look at this income vehicle for retirement, and see what some of the highlights, options, and benefits existing within the framework of this plan. CCA'S may participate in this plan with a minimum contribution of \$15/per pay period, earning expected competitive interest rates and the earnings are tax deferred. Upon retirement the MBA offers four ways to collect monthly

benefits: Life Annuity with Period Certain; Life Annuity; Joint Life Annuity; and a Full Cash Refund. (more information on definitions

and terms are available on the NALC website under the MBA menu).

The plan can be invested as either a Roth IRA, or a Traditional IRA but understand there are significant differences: participating CCA's may transfer their Traditional IRA funds to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) once they become career status letter carriers. The TSP is currently not set up to receive Roth IRA transfers at this time. (So that is something to consider if one is planning to contribute).

So, CCA'S there are wonderful informational brochures for this plan (and many others for career employees) once again on the NALC website under the benefit section. Just use the MBA drop down menu and click for each option. I always mention in these brief articles that one should perform due diligence to find out pertinent information, and discern if any of these investment vehicles and benefits are a "right fit" for an individual or for a family unit, because everyone/family has differing priorities/ goals/ needs/ planning etc...but a great beginning to gather information

Article courtesy of the Santa Barbara, California
June 2020 NALC Branch 290 *Beast of Burden*

UNCLE FRED'S IFFY ADVICE FOR NEWBIES

It kind of makes sense if you squint.

Hey kids! Uncle Fred here with some tips for those of you who may be new to this gig. Yeah, I've been packing a satchel since before some of your mothers made that special delivery at the hospital and I'd like to share a few handy dandy ideas that I've picked up over the years that may make your day at the P.O. just a little bit easier. Check 'em out! Collect them all!



1. If it doesn't move, scan it.
2. Technically, your casing partner's rubber band stash is the company's. Sharing is caring.
3. It's OK to accidentally take your vehicle key home sometimes. Preferably not on the day before you leave for your Hawaiian vacation, though.
4. If there's only a 90% chance of rain, the odds are good that you can leave that parcel on top of that rural box without its getting wet.
5. Don't report a slip, trip or fall if you can still move without crying. The pain pales to all the paperwork.
6. Don't ever let the boss tell you that you're too slow. Slugs are people, too!
7. "Commitment" isn't about justifying your existence.
8. You can claim full coverage if you happen to spill a tub that spreads across the floor.
9. Remember, words like "commitment", "credit" (for mail counts) and "penalty" (overtime) are twisted terms when coming from management.
10. Unfortunately, federal, state or local stalking laws don't apply to street observations.
11. Sometimes a COA can be DOA.
12. It's bad luck to put your hand in a pit bull's mouth.
13. Use your own judgement. (Ha! Just kidding!)
14. Murphy's postal law: The smaller the mailbox, the greater the chance that it's still crammed full.
15. If you get down in the dumps about the job, just remember, you're a pre-retiree!

It should go without saying that the advice in this graphic is offered "tongue-in-cheek..."

This "Pushing the Envelope" graphic is courtesy of the June 2020 Portland, Oregon NALC Branch 82 B-Mike. **THANX, KERRYS!**

Just a Reminder from Gary Summers, NALC Branch 1707

Letter Carriers get paid to deliver mail. Managers get paid to make decisions. If you realize that you will not be able to deliver all the mail and make it back to the office by the time the manager approved, you should do everything you can to put any further decisions in the manager's hands. The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor per local instructions. Call around two hours before the time you are scheduled to be back (approved on PS Form 3996). Let your supervisor know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask whether they want you to bring the mail back or finish the route. Follow whatever instructions your supervisor or manager gives you. If the supervisor or manager refuses to tell you what to do with the rest of the mail or if you can't finish your assigned duties in the amount of time initially specified by your supervisor, you should return to the office in the allotted time and ask for further instructions.

This an excerpt from a much longer article published in the June 2020 NALC Branch 1707 ZIPPER

A few things to consider in our changing world...

Hello Everyone, I hope all of you are safe and healthy.

By Fred A. Ranalli Jr., President
NALC Branch 258

The past few months have been hard on all of us. These times have made us change almost every part of our American lifestyle. A change that I believe will be with us for quite a while. Things that we took for granted or overlooked are now in the forefront of everything we do.

Masks, social distancing, hand washing and cleaning everything we touch have taken over our lives. This is something we read about or saw on the news in some other country, but not here.

This pandemic has really hit hard in the more populated areas of our country, killing the elderly at will. *It's so sad hearing about someone's loved one dying alone without their family to say goodbye.* It is heartbreaking.

Although I miss my parents dearly, I am somehow glad they aren't here suffering through this. I know they are in a better place.

As Letter Carriers, a lot has changed also. We now have staggered starting times and cleaning our work stations and vehicles everyday have become the norm. Although the parcels have increased, mail volumes have dropped because of the shutdown of America. It's something that had to be done and will continue in a lot of areas throughout the country. This has taken a

toll on small businesses and families all over the country.

We Letter Carriers are deemed essential. We are lucky in that respect, but that has come at a cost. Letter Carriers and postal workers have died from Covid 19.

The stress and uncertainty of this situation has been a great burden to you and your families. Your effort and continued professionalism has kept all of you safe up until now. I applaud all of you. You have exemplified what being a Letter Carrier is all about by serving the American people in every neighborhood and rural area across the country.

As I have stated in the past, Letter Carriers provide a sense of normalcy to our customers. That means a lot to the American public, especially in these times. I cannot thank you enough for your continued professionalism as you serve your patrons.

We all know there is a lot of misinformation out there, therefore, I am asking *all* members to consider what they post or write on social media. The facts are most important.

We all read, hear, or experience something that helps to form our opinion or beliefs. However, that doesn't make us experts.

There's an old saying about opinions that I am sure you might have heard

before. Negative opinions, especially those not based on facts that are put out to large groups of people, may have grave and dire consequences to our business and ultimately our jobs.

Social media platforms influence the people's opinions that read them. Unfortunately these platforms are sometimes the only place some individuals get their information that form their opinions. They might argue "since this person works there and says this is so then it must be true". Sadly that is not always the case.

Before posting something on social media it's probably a good idea to use the THINK test. Ask yourself: Is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?

Always remember it is never appropriate to cast any shadow over the USPS. We all took an oath when we were hired. Make sure you adhere to that oath no matter what your opinion is.

In closing, I want to again thank all of you for continuing to deliver your routes and putting yourself in harm's way every day.

You are truly Heroes. I am so proud to call you Brothers and Sisters.

Please don't let this pandemic divide us. We must stay united. We must help each other stay safe. We must stay united when fighting for our jobs. We can only do this together. It's what being a union member is about. Stay safe.

Courtesy of the Reading, Pennsylvania
NALC Branch 258 *NALCASTER*
published in June 2020



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.).

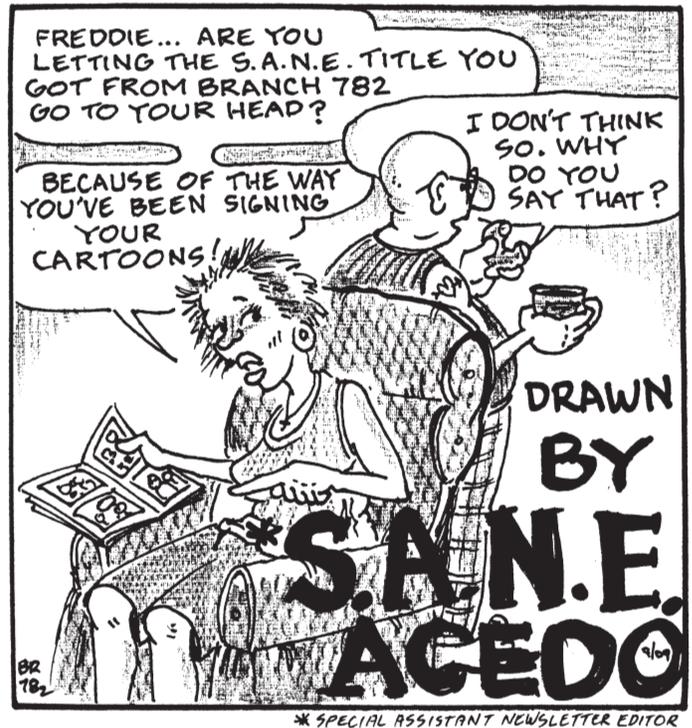
BASIL ZUNIGA

- • • • • **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!** •
- **When you order, please indicate if you are an NALC Editor!** •
- **Please make check payable to Basil Zuniga, Branch 782 Editor-guy** •

Please include \$7.90 for USPS Priority Mail postage.

NALC Branch 782 ● 2628 F Street ● Bakersfield, California ● 93301 ● (661) 205-1603

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



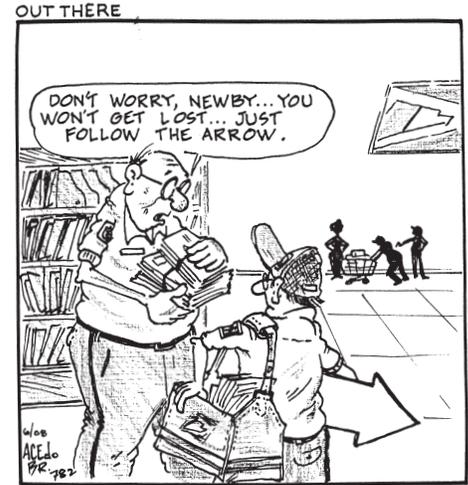
This is a sample. You are looking at page 74 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016...



Originally published April 2009



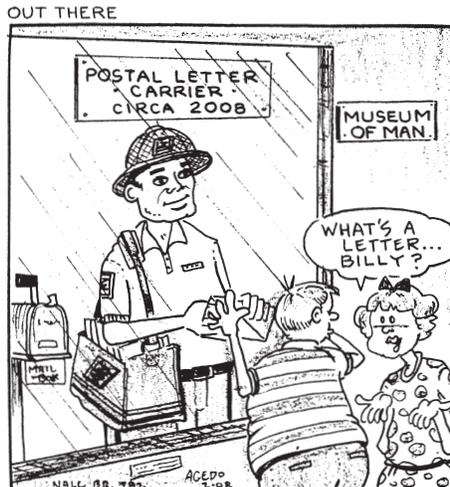
Originally published April 2009



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

Especially in the Covid pandemic, an **Out there** cartoon can be a little relief...

"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



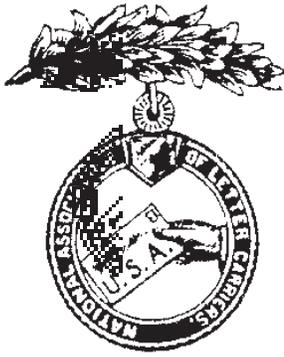
*S.A.N.E. SPECIAL ASSISTANT NEWSLETTER - BR. 782 - BAKERSFIELD, CA.



"Out there"



Have an idea for a cartoon? Mail your thought to Fred Acedo, S.A.N.E., P.O. Box 6532, Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532



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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.**

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* Denotes Post Office Phone Number

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Rick Plummer, Webmaster





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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

DUE TO THE CONTINUING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND FOR THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF ACTIVE AND RETIRED LETTER CARRIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, IT IS NECESSARY TO CANCEL THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC? See the national NALC website. Also, stay in touch with your Branch 782 Officers if you have questions!

"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



Each and every Branch 782 newsletter is a monthly snippet of time — a chapter in the history of YOU, the NALC Branch 782 Letter Carriers. Someday, what you are going through each day as you deliver the mail today will become "The Good Old Days" that you and others were able to survive. Yup.....

Welcome to the 32 page web version of our newsletter. Print version had eight pages...