

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
DELANO
MOJAVE

AVENAL
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
LAMONT
SHAFTER
TRONA

BORON
McFARLAND
TAFT
WASCO



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OCTOBER 2009

at the
Mike:



ONE DAY AT A TIME

by Michael L. Willadsen,
President, NALC Branch 86

**I want to share
an article
written by another
Branch President.
The topic is one
of interest.**

**Come to this
month's General
Meeting to hear
about more info,
too...**

Almost 6 months ago, Branch 86 along with every other Branch in Connecticut—with the exception of two—entered into an agreement with management to improve the atmosphere on the workroom floor. For 2-3 months, Connecticut's NALC Branch Presidents got together and worked out a "plan" to present to District Manager Edward Phelan and his staff. After some fine-tuning, we signed off for a period of 3 months and have since signed off on another three month period. What does it mean? What doesn't it mean?

An explanation. I have always felt that a "union" publication should be just that: a review and analysis of those timely and critical issues affecting our members. There has been plenty of information printed about the current "crisis" that our employer finds itself in. (All I will say is that I do not dispute Letter Carriers' observations that mail volume is not what it once was.) I will say that I have a hard time quantifying the degree to which our work has gone away because of decreased volumes because I simply don't believe the Postal Service's numbers. Why? Because some years ago during a contentious contract negotiations, the USPS admitted that they kept two sets of books. So, while I do acknowledge that that which fuels our work has diminished, I only do so to the extent that I need to assist Branch 86 members so that they don't become the scapegoats for this trend.

Continued on next page...

Why something different? It has been my experience that in bad times, management will attempt to blame craft employees instead of looking inward in a more progressive manner. We had already experienced a spike in discipline due to declining mail volumes - as if it is Carriers' fault that mail volume is declining. The problem with this type of knee-jerk reaction is that this just increases the problem of shrinking revenue when you start adding in all of the associated grievance-arbitration costs. On the flip side, management is always concerned over the number of grievances we file and the time/cost effect that that has on the Service's bottom line. So, were the parties mature enough to seek a middle ground?

No discipline. No grievances. In a nutshell, we agreed to add another level of discipline and grievance review to that which is ascribed to in our contract. Situational reviews occur at the District level and alternatives are discussed and suggested. If management has any operational concerns with a Carrier, the Steward is supplied the information and the Steward discusses the matter with the Carrier. If the NALC had any concerns regarding the application of the contract, and a meeting with the supervisor did not clarify the issue, then it was elevated to the NALC Presidents-Connecticut District Staff level for review and resolve. At this level, the Labor Relations Manager is also involved.

The results? So far, in the 40 Branch 86 offices, only 3 Letter Carriers have been disciplined in 6 months! In that same time frame, not more than a dozen grievances have been filed, and several of them were filed to tie to national level disputes, while the bulk of the other disputes involved TE issues! While this is a huge departure from business-as-usual, it is what is called for in the National Agreement; i.e. that all disputes should be addressed and resolved at the lowest step possible. Speaking from a NALC Branch 86 perspective, I can say unequivocally that not one NALC's members rights have been mitigated in this process. We purposely keep the updating of the memo's to 3-month periods just in case we need to revert back to "old business."

In the meantime.... Following the national NALC's lead, we are now working together to

promote USPS products which will lead to increase mail products for us to deliver and securing our goal of well paid and benefited jobs for our future. For Branch 86 offices, the Customer Connect Program went from passive acknowledgment to aggressive endorsement. As part of the grievance and discipline moratorium, more can be accomplished with postal patrons in this program because the Carrier is not leaving the office in a foul mood after daily confrontations with supervisors.

Analysis. I have been doing this union thing for almost 30 years, and I know old ways die hard—especially for me. I know that we have Stewards who are chomping at the bit to flood the system with grievances while, at the same time, there are supervisors who have felt that they have been "dejuiced" because they can't fire anyone. At this juncture, however, this simply can't be what we are all about. We negotiated the "...No discipline - No Grievance..." memorandums with the Connecticut District from a position of strength, and we did it with a District Manager who subjected himself to the same criticisms from his staff that the Connecticut Branch Presidents receive from some of their Officers and Stewards. But, we are beginning to reap the rewards of our efforts, and the ultimate reward will be job security.



If you are interested,
contact the Branch 782
Coordinator, Glenn Ryder
at Dole Court
(661) 392-7052



MDA

Deliver the Cure Bowl

Sunday, November 1, 2009

Sign up and be a part of history!



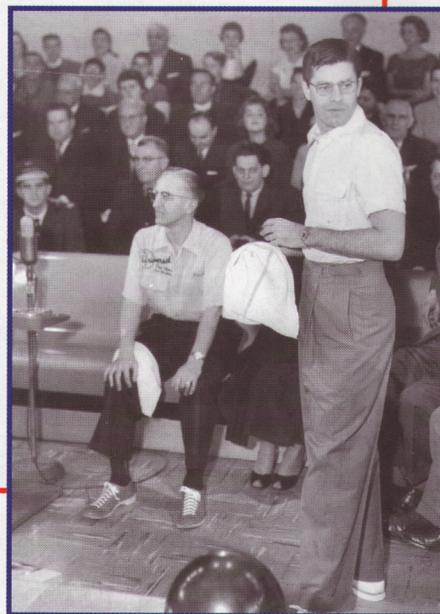
Please join me and thousands of other letter carriers across the country in the first NALC-MDA national bowlathon November 1.

*Together, we can make a difference
and help deliver a cure.*

—NALC National President Fredric V. Rolando

For more information, go to
www.nalc.org/commun/mda/index.html

To Benefit
MDA
www.mda.org



Jerry Lewis circa 1953

This is an interesting rumor that recently appeared on the internet...

Postmasters to boycott “Voice of the Employee” survey

The following is said to be a copy of a message from League of Postmasters President Charley Mapa to his members, asking that they refuse to participate in the US Postal Service’s Voice of the Employee survey. The survey, which all employees are asked to complete once a year, has been the subject of a boycott by postal unions since the USPS attempted to use favorable survey results in contract negotiations.

Dear Leaguers,

Recently your National Board met and decided that the League would no longer support the VOE survey. While the intent behind the survey may be good, the fact of the matter is that the work situation for Postmasters continues to deteriorate. In so many districts dignity and respect for PMs have ceased to

exist. The Postal Service deliberately does not staff in order to pile work hours on to Postmasters. Reports and logs continue to proliferate, thereby stretching a long day into a longer day. Discipline for trivial reasons continues and micro-management reduces Postmasters to mindless robots.

You may not be suffering personally from any of these situations, but thousands of Postmasters nationwide are. I urge you, in support of Postmasters everywhere, to simply not fill out the survey. This is one report that you are not required to complete. Please spread the word; the more of us who refuse to participate, the louder our voice of the employee will be.

Respectfully,

Charley Mapa
President
National League of Postmasters

Darryl’s Q&A???

Who can OPT on a vacant (vacation) route?

Any PTF that is not on an OPT can OPT on a vacant (vacation) route.

Who can OPT on a higher level detail (T-6)?

Any PTF or regular carrier.

Will PTF with OPT that goes on vacation lose the OPT?

When PTF returns from vacation and route is still vacant, PTF resumes OPT.

Will PTF with higher level detail that goes on vacation lose detail?

Yes, if vacation is five or more days and someone else OPTs on higher level detail.

Can a PTF from another office in the city work more hours than a PTF stationed in that same office?

Yes. Each office has PTFs stationed. However, PTFs don’t have guaranteed hours so a PTF helping from another station may get more hours than one from that particular office.

DARRYL HOLDERMAN
Branch 782 Vice-President



I've Been Trained!!!

Last month in September, I had the opportunity to attend an NALC workshop in Washington D.C. The workshop focused on the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. It was three days full of in depth information, instruction and guidance on fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of those positions. Classes covered things from internal controls to Branch record retention. From members and dues, to audits from Department of Labor (DOL) and, to IRS reporting and taxes.

These topics are very serious and don't sound "fun". (Unless you are a CPA...) In any one of these positions, one has an enormous responsibility to safeguard monies from member dues and all assets and property acquired from those dues. Attending these classes stressed the importance of reporting and filing correctly and of having control in place such as trustee audits and having two or more signatures on all checks. The workshop was attended well with approximately 100 people from all over the country and Puerto Rico. All NALC members...all Letter Carriers.

Thanks you to the membership for sending me to learn. I intend to continue doing a good job as Financial Secretary for my Branch.

ANITA HOLDERMAN
Branch 782 Financial Secretary



NALC Branch 782 Financial Secretary Anita Holderman poses in front of a poster at one of the Smithsonian Museums in Washington, DC.

Major bill passes the House of Representatives allowing FERS carriers to apply unused sick leave toward retirement

HR 2647 (The 2010 Defense Department authorization measure) has just been approved by the House Conference Committee by a 281-146 majority. This legislation would allow FERS federal and postal employees to receive retirement credit for their unused sick leave. The measure now moves on to the Senate where it may be voted on this week.

Our Legislative Program, led by our E-Activist network and COLCPE, has been working hard over the past couple of years to remedy the unfair treatment FERS employees currently experience by not getting the same sick leave credit as CSRS covered employees. We are hopeful this legislation will go forward; however, the Bill still needs Senate approval where it might face possible budgetary objections before it can be sent to President Obama for his signature.

Under the Conference Report, sick leave credit for FERS-covered employees would be phased-in over a four year period, beginning with 50% credit for employees who retire after enactment of the measure, and ultimately 100% credit for employees retiring on or after January 1, 2014.

The Defense authorization measure also includes other civil service provisions: Making it easier for federal agencies to

rehire federal retirees on a limited, part-time basis, without requiring them to take a cut in their retirement pension; and allowing FERS employees who left and returned to government service to redeposit savings in the retirement system and earn credit for years they already worked in government.

A phase-in for federal and postal employees who live and work in Hawaii, Alaska, Virgin Islands and U.S. Territories into a locality-based pay system—that will permit locality pay adjustments (unlike COLAs)—will be credited in their retirement annuity calculations and count as part of salary for Thrift Savings Plan contributions.

We all need to be sure that we are ready for any E-Activist alerts that may call upon us to contact our representatives when this legislation is shortly debated in the United States Senate. The California State Association of Letter Carriers will continue to inform you of the status of this legislation as we continue to work diligently for its passage.

In Unionism,

Diana Chavez
NALC Branch 782 Legislative Liaison

Minutes of the September 2009 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 22nd day of September, 2009 at the branch office Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson.

All members of the Executive Board were present except Vice President Darryl Holderman, Treasurer Molly Biggar and Financial Secretary Anita Holderman. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, E.B., Hillcrest, Oildale, Shafter, Stockdale and Taft. Emma Gonzales and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee were present as well as OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

TEES: Teresa Ortega reported that the picnic is still “a long way off” and we are waiting to get a date. Basil Zuniga reported that Stockdale did a great job getting members together on short notice. Next month will be Camino Media’s turn for the folding and stapling. Frank Martinez reported that attendance to the Dodger game went well. The tickets for “Disney on Ice” are sold out, and the Holiday Dinner Dance will be held in early December and will be \$25 per person. Teresa Garcia reported on the National MDA Bowl a thon for Committee Chair Glen Ryder. Teresa Garcia made a motion that the branch donate \$1000.00 to the Bowl-a-Thon. Five Hundred will be used for food and the remaining \$500 to be used for prizes. Seconded by Jerry Patterson. The motion was tabled until next month because the motion has to be published in the Newsletter and a vote will be taken at the October meeting. A discussion was held regarding ways to earn money for sponsorships. Teresa Garcia was given the name and phone number of the local MDA contact person.

NEW BUSINESS: A discussion was held regarding moving money from the checking account into the Convention Account. Bill Curtis made a motion that \$20,000.00 be moved from the checking account to the Convention Account. The motion was seconded by Diana Chavez and passed. Basil discussed his desire to have as many Branch members as possible attend some of the Convention. Basil said he would be willing to drive anyone interested in attending for the day to Anaheim. President Mike Towery opened the nominations for the National Convention. Nominated were: Emma Gonzales, Anita Holderman, Mabel Bullis, John Ortega, Diana Chavez, Pam Smith, Mike Meza, Danny Blair, Norma Hamer, Paul Salazar, Rolando Trevino, Frank Martinez, Shari Sharpe, Lucinda Martinez, Jerry Patterson, Basil Zuniga, Molly Biggar, Kim Gerdes, Mark Ramirez, Debbie Guillet, Teresa Ortega, Jeff Harrington, Rick Gerdes, Randy Courson, Robert Campos, Jason Munoz, Lynnel Howell and Bonita Lewis. Mike Towery reminded nominated delegates

that to qualify for Branch funds the delegates must attend 10 of the 12 meetings prior to the convention. Kim Gerdes reminded members who nominated someone who was not at the meeting tonight will need to remind the nominees to get an acceptance letter to Kim within 3 days.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery addressed the concerns that some TE’s have. He is willing to have another TE meeting if there is sufficient interest. Mable Bullis, Norma Hamer, Shari Sharpe, John Ortega and Mike Meza attended a training class on Formal A’s by National Business Agent Manny Peralta at the branch office.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported on the Arbitration for a Carrier in Boron. It was settled with a 21 day suspension and back pay. John Ortega reported on MIRAP, a current 3999 will be needed for the next round of adjustments. Management will be doing 3999’s on each route. The month used for evaluation for the next round of adjustments will depend on the month your station was adjusted last time. National Business Agent Manny Peralta explained that there is no way the adjustment process could work without the input from the NALC. He said that John Ortega did a great job. Anyone who has problems with MIRAP should go to the NALC website and read M-1703. He said Carriers should be keeping track of mail volume for their route every day. Carriers are entitled to a copy of their completed 3996. Carriers should give feedback to local representative during the script. Give him/her something to help you. Mike Towery thanked John Ortega for all his work. Diana Chavez discussed HR22 and S1507. Pam Smith will help anyone who is having trouble signing up for COLCPE. She plans to set up a booth at the Bowl-a-Thon. Mike Towery congratulated Linda Cope and Mike Newton on their retirement and reported that John Dennis, Mojave, and Joe Contreras, East Bakersfield, will be retiring at the end of the month. Mike Towery presented plaques to Kim Gerdes, Mark Ramirez and Basil Zuniga for their contributions to Branch 782. He commended Teresa Ortega for keeping the presentation a secret. NBA Manny Peralta discussed HR22. The Bill passed the House 398 – 32 with 13 abstained. The Bill was asking for long term relief, 6 – 8 years. No other company, public or private, pre-pays their Health Benefits. The government pays for military service for every other Federal Agency except the USPS. If long term relief for the Postal Service does not pass, the NALC is prepared for difficult negotiations in 2011. The Postal Service is expected to go to Arbitration stating that they cannot afford pay raises or Cost of Living Adjustments. The NALC has to help keep the “company” alive and bring in revenue with Customer Connect and save costs with MIRAP. Manny shared the NRP statistics that President Rolando shared: 20% of the employees evaluated have recovered, 10% have retired and 17% were sent home with no work available. He stated that 47% of limited duty employees are not working. He assured everyone that the rules of Article 13 cannot be changed by NRP. This has been reaffirmed by an Arbitra-

tor. Manny encouraged all members to give to COLCPE, if you need help, Pam Smith will help. Join E-Activist, go to the NALC website to sign up. Get involved as a Carrier Core Volunteer, give 10 hrs to the branch to commit to the next election to walk precincts or phone banks. He stated that the NALC is the 15th largest Union in the country but the most powerful on election day. Manny discussed the Flat Sorting Machines, the GPS in vehicles and the CORE program.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman was in training and will report next month.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kim Gerdes reported for Molly Biggar:

Beginning Balance	\$61,791.71
Dues and Income	\$18,598.92
Interest Income	\$ 13.66
Total Balance	\$80,404.29
Total Expenses	\$10,444.85
Ending Balance	\$69,959.44

Mike Towery appointed Darryl Holderman as chairperson for the election committee. He told the members present that in February we will have been in the office for 10 years. The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by John Ortega. The drawing

for \$200.00 would have been won by Laura Davis if she had been present. There were 33 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43

Respectfully Submitted,
KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

October 2009 General Membership Meeting Drawing

\$250

There is one "catch"... You have to be present to win.

DOWNTOWN STATION

Dale Pearce
Javier Cruz

SOUTH STATION

100% Union!!!

EAST BAKERSFIELD

100% Union!!!

HILLCREST

A. White

BRUNDAGE

David Kinglee

DOLE COURT

100% Union!!!

STOCKDALE

Ron Huston
James Oh
G.S. Saran

CAMINO MEDIA

F. Medina, Jr.

ARVIN

100% Union!!!

AVENAL

100% UNION!!!

NON-MEMBER LIST September 2009

BORON

100% Union!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY

100% Union!!!

DELANO

C. V. Quebral
L. A. Campos

EDWARDS

100% Union!!!

LAMONT

100% Union!!!

McFARLAND

100% Union!!!

MOJAVE

100% Union!!!

RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce
H. G. Blanco
R. M. Noke
T. K. Miller

SHAFTER

L. M. New
M. D. Voights

TAFT

B. W. Krier
K. J. Hughes

TEHACHAPI

V. L. Johnson

TRONA

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

WASCO

100% Union!!!

Basil, 416 of the 439 craft employees in cities we serve are NALC members! We have achieved a total of 94.7%.

*Submitted by KIM GERDES
Branch 782 Recording Secretary*

2009 NALC HBP Info

NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
*** Mental & Substance Precert.	1-877-468-1016
Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Hearing Impaired	1-800-238-1217
*** CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
*** Durable Medical Eqpt.	1-888-636-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
Nurse Assistant (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
***CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quest Diagnostics (Lab Services)	1-877-220-6252
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-784-8797
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
**** Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213

* Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by the Plan. Must notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates. ** Mail order drug prescription program long term (maintenance drugs) 60 day supply: \$8 generic, \$24 name brand; 90 day supply: \$12 generic, \$35 name brand. Retail Pharmacy, you pay 25% . MEDICARE 60 day supply: \$7 generic, \$20 name brand; 90 day supply: \$10 generic, \$30 name brand. Network Retail Pharmacy you pay 15% of the cost of the prescription. Prior approval required for some drugs. Must call the Plan. *** **Prior Approval Required.** **** Asthma and Diabetic.



**Branch 782
Health Benefit
Representative**

**Mark
Ramirez**
(661) 834-5011

**NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, VA 20149**

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

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

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

**Preferred Provider (PPO)
Cost: \$15.00
Co-pay per office visit**

**Preferred Provider (PPO)
Deductible
\$250 Individual
\$500 Self & Family
Per Calendar Year**

Contact Information

Center for Disease Control	http://www.cdc.gov
National Library of Medicine	http://www.nlm.nih.gov
American Public Health Assoc.	http://www.alpha.org
American Cancer Society	http://www.cancer.org
American Heart Association	http://www.americanheart.org
American Lung Association	http://www.lunusa.org
Diabetes Foundation	http://www.diabetis.org
Muscular Dystrophy Association	http://www.mdausa.org
JAMA Asthma Information Center	http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma
Your Personal Health Record	http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp
National Patient Safety	http://www.npsf.org

2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

The 2009 swine flu virus was originally referred to as swine flu because lab testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America.

Further studies have shown this new virus is very different from what circulates in the North American pigs. This new flu virus has two genes that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia and bird (avian) genes and human genes. Scientists call this a QUADRUPLE REASSORTANT virus.

This new flu virus is ongoing in the US, is spread from human to human, and is believed to occur the same way the seasonal flu spreads, through coughing and sneezing, by individuals with the flu. People can become infected by touching surfaces that have this flu virus, and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

The seasonal flu varies in duration and severity, but we know on the average in the United States 36,000 people will die from flu related complications, and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu related causes. Of those hospitalized, 20,000+ are children younger than 5 years old. Over 90% of deaths occur in patients older than 65 years old.

But with this 2009 H1N1 flu, the CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's information has shown there to be a greater disease burden in people younger than 25 years old, than in people older than 64 years old. Those that are in the high risk category include those individuals with asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, heart disease, kidney disease, neurocognitive and neuromuscular disorders, and pregnancy.

People infected with seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu can infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after, and longer in some individuals.

The H1N1 vaccine is currently in production, and will be available in early fall 2009, and the seasonal flu shots will always be available.

There are every day steps that one can take to protect your health during flu season:

1. Cover your mouth with tissue when you Cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water frequently, or use an alcohol based hand rub.
3. Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes, as this can infect you with the flu virus.
4. Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you believe you may have the flu, see your family Doctor, and be aware you can infect others around you.

In Children, emergency warning signs that need medical attention include: fast or troubled breathing, bluish or gray skin color, not drinking enough fluids, severe vomiting, fever, and severe cough.

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

1. Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath,
2. Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen,
3. Sudden dizziness, or confusion,
4. Severe or persistent vomiting,
5. Flu like symptoms improve but then return with fever and severe cough.

Studies have shown that the flu virus can survive and infect a person from 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on a surface. Influenza virus can be destroyed by heat (167-212 F degrees) in addition several chemical/germicides including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soaps) iodophors (iodine based antiseptics) and alcohols are effective against human flu viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time.

Remember, any bedding, towels, eating utensils, dishes, or toys should be cleaned or washed with soap and hot water if used by person or child with the flu.

A person *cannot* be infected by eating pork, and this virus is not spread by food. But always handle and cook all foods properly, and wash your hands frequently.

And now...with a look to find some kind of humor in all of this: "Do you know the difference between the bird flu and the swine flu? With the bird flu....you have to receive a tweetment. with the swine flu....you must use an oinkment..."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SEASONAL AND H1N1 FLU, LOG ON TO: WWW.cdc.gov

MARK RAMIREZ
Branch 782 HBP Representative



(l-r) NBA Manny Peralta looks down at the table as Mark Ramirez receives an award from President Mike Towery.

This is How I See Things...

When I was approached to go to the Secretary-Treasurer Training, I was kind of hesitant thinking that I wasn't skilled or knowledgeable enough to even think about handling this task now or in the future. Don't get me wrong, I was very excited at the thought of going to Washington D.C.—a place I've never been to before. But, I didn't want to bite off more than I could chew.



I have been to two other Union gatherings before the Secretary-Treasurer Training 2009. One was a Grievances class in Los Angeles that really was taught well by our National Business Agent, Manny Peralta. The other was a Leadership Conference in San Diego. I was timid at those meetings. I had just become a Steward a year ago and found myself in the same room with sharp, knowledgeable people. How could I think I would ever match up to them? There is where the eye opener came! The union is only as strong as those people (like you and me) willing to participate in it. I've realized that our local branch is great today because we have these dedicated people involved in our Union keeping it going strong.

I know that we take for granted what our local Union is all about. Some people's main thoughts are: "I'm paying into the Union and what does the Union do for me?" I was approached when I became a PTF and thought, "OKAY, everyone else is paying into the Union, I should too." These days, I kick myself for not being involved from the beginning.

There is so much to share after going to this last training session. It's given me a new perspective of how strong and not so strong Unions can be. We take for granted what our Executive Board members do for our local branch. Being at this Secretary-Treasurer Training I spoke to Presidents, Sergeant of Arms, Treasurers, Stewards and others. I found members present who were neither Secretaries nor Treasurers but they needed to be there for their local branch to cross-train and keep their branch going strong. Some branches still had retiree's as



Treasurer Molly Biggar, Financial Secretary Anita Holderman, Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillette and Mabel Bullis visit the Vincent R. Sombrotto bust at NALC Headquarters in Washington, DC.



Just down the street from NALC Headquarters is the Smithsonian Postal Museum. (l-r) Anita Holderman, Lisa Carroll (Alabama Branch 1630) Mabel Bullis, Debbie Guillette and Molly Biggar see what Washington DC is all about!

their Executive Board because younger people are not involved

The first day of our class, we all gathered together, with all the attendees from all over, and

we were introduced to our Union Secretary-Treasurer, Jane Broendel. After the introductions of several knowledgeable people: Jaime Lumm, David Dorsey, Scott Price, Nancy Dicer and our new Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Nicole Rhine, we were divided into three groups to facilitate our training. These smaller groups led to great participation.

When we got to our assigned classes we introduced ourselves to our classmates for the week. After hearing who they were and what position they had, I found I was not the only one that wasn't a Secretary or a Treasurer. There were Presidents, Sergeant-at-Arms, Trustees, and others. Everyone was cross-training to do their part in keeping their local Branches going strong.

The classes were designed not to be intimidating. I didn't feel out of place like a fish out of water. Everyone had questions and everyone shared their experiences and knowledge. It was great! The best part for me was to see that Jane Broendel was in on our curriculums. It's nice to know that the "Top Dog" isn't too busy to sit down and be there with us throughout the day and not just hand it off to the other instructors.

The most important thing we were made to understand was that the Branch elected officials are handling the membership's money. You have to beware of a lot of things in regards to handling the member's money such as taxes and we all know how much taxes can be so "taxing" (haha, get it?).

As Jane Broendel said, "As Secretary-Treasurer, my focus is on improving financial and administrative operations as well as assisting Branch and State Association officers in their fiduciary and administrative duties." She said, "This will entail communicating more effectively and providing educational opportunities."

And by golly, the NALC did provide me with a great educational opportunity!! I learned a lot of different things on many different levels...



Mabel Bullis poses with NALC Secretary-Treasurer Jane Broendel and new Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine during a break in the training program.

I had no idea about this next fact: For all the other Carriers out there that do not know, **“Every one of our national officers is be a Letter Carrier.”** They are not lawyers, professors or experts that were hired to do the job. They are actually just like you and me!! They are Letter Carriers that other Letter Carriers elected to represent them. So, for that reason alone, they know what we go through. They know what we struggle with on a day to day basis. They have been there and committed themselves to make things better for us today.

We are the strongest Union in today’s world and that strength comes from our National Resident Officers, our local officers and our membership. We are Letter Carrier Strong!!

Every day we face challenges that we struggle to make better for the future. If people hadn’t stepped up to the plate and stood strong while life was at its worse, we would not have overcome the worst of things like Segregation in schools, getting Women’s Right to Vote, etc. In respect to our Union, we wouldn’t have a Contract that protects our rights, increases in our pay by contract and Cost of Living Allowances (COLA), Union Health Benefits, protections from Sub-contracting, and



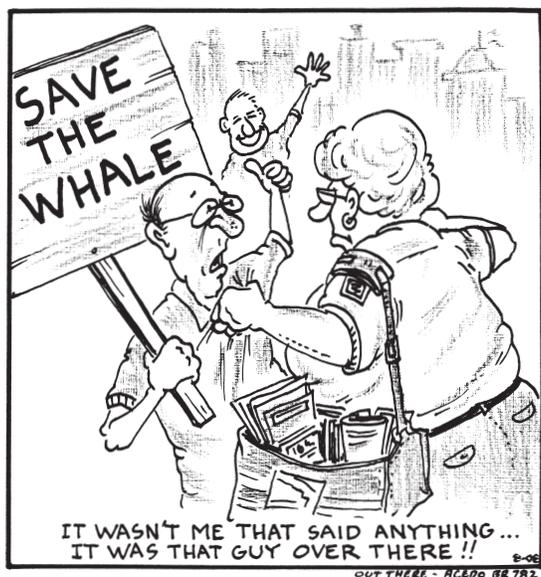
San Diego Branch 70 President Ricardo Guzman and Charles Lewis, Branch 70 Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, “captured” by Mabel Bullis’ camera during one of the class sessions.

many other things. There are many, many other things that the Union has done for us over the years and to sit and nitpick



about the things the Union hasn’t done.. it’s not comparable. So for those of you who have not needed the help of your Steward, be grateful and to the others that have gotten help, be thankful. We do the best to our abilities to be able to assist our Brothers and Sisters in the Union. If you think we can do better, come lend a hand and get more involved. Thanks for letting me attend this informative class. I will continue to strive to keep our Union potent now and in the future.

MABEL BULLIS



Brundage Biggest Loser: TWISTER!!!

Don’t forget about the next “Brundage Biggest Loser—Couples Edition” starting January 2, 2010. It’s been asked if each station can have a designated person to weigh in people at their station and report back to me with the weigh ins and money. We are all on the honor system so if people would like to do that, so that they don’t have to travel to Brundage, and majority rules, then it’s fine with me. Please call me and give me your input ASAP. Remember, one teammate at least has to be a Postal employee, the other can be anyone else.

Mabel Bullis
Brundage Steward

Brundage Station Partied!

We had our first station B-B-Q on October 11, 2009 at Saunders Park. It was a great gathering! At Brundage we get along well enough to enjoy a beautiful Sunday together and the adults actually participated in some of the games—for the kids sake, of course. We enjoyed: *The Potato Race*, which is having a potato between your knees and dropping it in the bucket at the other end.



Cassius Hooper showing some game-winning skills???

The Orange Race, which is putting an orange under your neck and transferring it to your next partner who then transfers it to the last partner and then runs to the end. *The Jelly Bean Race*, which is putting a spoon in your mouth with a jelly bean in it and running to the end to drop it in the bucket.



Charlene Cantuj and Ruby Torres are all smiles and having a great time!

I came up with the games that morning from the good old internet, so that was the best I could come up with. It seemed as though everyone enjoyed themselves. It was still talked about the next day at work. So that is always a good thing. Can't wait for next time. We all like to give a great big "THANKS" to Jas Brar for getting us together and providing the meat and drinks and also to John Ortega for being the B-B-Q man. It was yummy!! Way to go Bull Dogs!



Carrie Kendrick gets ready to drop her potato in the bucket as John Ortega smiles.

Mabel Bullis
Brundage Steward

Good-bye, Mike!

We had a potluck to bid farewell and Congratulations to Mike Bettes as he officially left being our Station Manager, even though we didn't know about it until weeks later. We all wish him luck and happy trails in his new venture as a Manager of Post Office Operations.

Good Luck Mike!





Scenes from some of the recent Branch Membership Meetings



Government Control and the Recession

There is no good reason that the Union is supporting "Health Care Reform" except that it is what the AFL/CIO wants. That's what I heard from our California State President, John Beaumont at our last general meeting. In the September, 2009 *Postal Record*, page 9, NALC President, Fredric V. Rolando was elected vice president of the AFL/CIO following the resignation of William H. Young, our former National President. Apparently, we're following the agenda of a bigger union, not the NALC.

The Union support for Democrats is overwhelming in that they helped elect a "pro-worker" Congress and president. (pa.9) The Democrats with Pelosi and Reed as their leaders, took over the house and senate in January, 2007. The *Postal Record* has stated that the recession started eleven months later, in December, 2007. In 2008 we had our highest gas prices ever in the country which cost the Postal Service a bundle in operating costs and hurt us badly. The Democrats responded by locking up as much of our domestic oil production and refining capacity as possible; the reason?; none given save the demonization of the hard working oil producers and the false promotion of "Global Warming" which is nothing more than another government tax and control on our lives. The Democrats are currently passing through their "cap & trade" energy bills that even they admit will increase, dramatically, all of our energy costs.

Currently, we're in "the worst economic decline in 80 years." (pg.11) Since Obama has been in office (8 months on 9-20-09) we have witnessed the wanton destruction of the free enterprise system in the United States by the Democrats rushing everything that they can through, without debate or consent of the people. Pelosi and Reed have gone so far as to cut the Republicans out of specified meetings, and ramming their agenda through at breakneck speed to Obama's desk for quick approval. They tried to do the same with the government takeover of our Health Care but Americans who oppose them were able to put the brakes on before the August recess. If the Union, the Democrats and Obama get their way we will lose our choices that we currently have. Right now, without government interference, we have the freedom to choose private or government care; whichever we can afford and are eligible for. Private business does not have the power to force its will upon anyone, however, if the government wants anything, it has the resources and power to force you to do anything it wants! Think about that before you cede even more power over to them!

As of August, the Obama deficit hit \$1.38 TRILLION (\$1,380,000,000,000.00) Approximately 3 MILLION people are now unemployed; hundreds of car dealerships are closed; about 90 banks have been closed; the "stimulus" is not working; tax revenues are down; people are still losing their homes and at Congressman McCarthy's town hall meeting in San Luis Obispo County (Bill Young's home turf) 77.7% of the people polled reject Obamacare.

On page 3, "worst economic contraction since the Great Depression" "Mail volume has declined by 13%" "elimination of 36,000 career jobs over the past year". Letter Carriers, look at the mail that you deliver! Most of it comes from private business! Without private business WE, have NO business! Early in 2009 we lost 66% of our circulars and the decline continues because the out-of-control government continues to take over and control private business! There will be NO end to the recession as long as the government continues to punish Americans with ever more taxes, mandates, takeovers and spending! Mail volume will continue to decline and they'll be proposing a 4 day workweek as they have in Utah State. A Democrat assemblyman in New York, Michael Gianaris, has suggested it for his state.

If you want our Union to stop going down this road to our final destruction, then give them a call at (202) 393-4695 and tell them to STOP!

BILL CURTIS

Health Care in The United States of America is not something for the government to play with or politicize.

Good Health Care is not a right, but something that must be earned and worked for. Doctors must work to pay for their education that may take up to 12 years or longer before they are licensed to practice. Nurses follow a similar regimen on a smaller scale and then there is all of the support staff, including those trained in radiology, lab technicians, pharmaceuticals, therapy and administration. There are hospitals and research facilities and many private companies inventing and providing tools and machines that medical personnel use to diagnose and treat patients. Government pays for none of these things unless they confiscate funds from citizens in the form of taxation. Who do they tax? YOU! Look at your pay stub! There's Federal, State, Medicare and Social Security. Then there's your deduction for your own Health Care Plan and another for your retirement fund. Before the government can take this money from you, you must work for it to earn it!

Now according to those of us who are informed, our health benefits will not “dramatically change”. What does that mean? The *New York Times* reported on 9-18-09 that the union endorsed presidential candidate for 2004, John Kerry, D-Mass., said, “working folks with a lower level of income will get dragged in,” and the tax could affect union members who have sacrificed pay raises to get health benefits. I thought that the Democrat Health Care takeover exempted union members?? It exempts the president and the congress! Forty-two states lost jobs last month, (August, 2009) with the Labor Department also reporting 27 states with an increase in unemployment and 14 states and Washington, D.C. with rates of 10% or above. California’s unemployment rate is 12.2% (highest on record) and Kern County is 14.3%. California lost 12,300 non-farm jobs in August. So who do you think is going to pay for Government Health Care? Accord-

OUT THERE



ing to the union they are going to require all companies to finally pay “their fair share”. The Post Office is already hurting from a huge loss of business as reported by the *Postal Record*, so when Government controlled Health Care is passed, guess what? Even more businesses will fold and shut down! Do you think that our mail volume will ever come back? When you blindly go after your own customers using the power of government to punish them for not bowing to your demands, they will cease to exist or drastically cut back, laying off even more employees! Businesses are already overwhelmed by government interference and demands. Why do you think so many relocate to foreign countries? I saw firsthand on my old business route the toll that government intrusion takes on small businesses. They are just people who are trying to make a living for their families. Now we’ve all heard 45 or 47 (NALCeActivist) or almost 50 Million (9-09 Br 782 Update) Americans uninsured. At least 20 million are foreign nationals here illegally. That leaves 25 to 30 million. The AP (Associated Press) reports on 9-22-09 that the 10-year \$856 billion package would extend coverage to about 29 million Americans. That leaves between 250 and 270 million U.S. citizens who are taking care of business by providing for their selves and their families. It would be stupid and grossly irresponsible to ruin the hard work of these responsible U.S. people who are doing what they are supposed to do and impose this oppressive government mandate upon them for no logical or beneficial reason! Call Senators Boxer (415) 403-0100 & Feinstein (415) 393-0707 and tell them to fix their own government Medicare (one of your payroll deductions) and Medicaid and to leave U.S. alone! The federal budget is already overwhelmed by the abusive, out-of-control spending of the Washington, D.C. politicians who can’t get enough of our hard earned money! “cost the jobs of more than 6 million Americans” (NALC President Fred Rolando, July 10, 2009).

BILL CURTIS
Br 782 Trustee

(Information gathered from the *New York Times*, Associated Press, *Postal Record*, *Br.782 Update*, & the *Bakersfield Californian*.)

The Anatomy of a Route Adjustment

by Stevie Halliburton
NALC Branch 737 M.I.A.R.A.P. Local Coordinator

Let me begin by first saying an adjustment of a route is the direct reflection of its most current occupant. If you are to receive an addition or reduction to the route you are assigned, you must first have demonstrated its necessity. During the many visits made to offices within the district, I have observed flawed procedures perpetrated by fellow Carriers.

Many good Carriers come in and burn through their routes on office time oblivious to the expected office standard for that day. If asked to then case on other routes, some are not clocking over to that route. The carrier then leaves for the street with a dogged determination to be back by a time dictated by some personal event. Consequently, they often end up back at the office before their eight hour tour and either take annual or LWOP.

When the DEA (District Evaluation & Assessment) team arrives, this demonstrated performance is evaluated and leads directly to an addition to this route. When an addition to a route is caused by the mail volume being lower than usual, this is understandable.

On the other hand, when a Carrier is casing better than office standards, runs the street portion of the route and expects this to be rewarded, it shows a lack of the reality of the times on that Carrier's part!

For better or for worse, these types of Carriers are affecting the overall makeup of the office.

Obviously, there has been a tremendous drop in the mail volume for the majority of routes making them woefully under eight hours. Couple this with an over eager carrier and you have a serious domino effect at hand.

First, if there are not enough auxiliary routes or any vacant routes in a particular office, the next option is to cause the Carrier with the lowest seniority to relinquish their position on the route they are assigned.

Secondly, territory that is transferred has to be paired with routes in a manner that matches the receiving carrier's casing factor. That is, the amount of time it takes them to case a segment of mail.

Often this may lead to either too much or too little of an adjustment since no two Carriers are exactly alike.

Third, most of the 3999's received are inaccurate or not up to date. Put all together, you end up with a less than desirable office adjustment. We as Carriers should understand the fact that you are expected to work to office standards and that is what you should do as long as that is what the DEA team is mandated to use.

By this I mean if your office standards is two hours and thirty minutes, that is what you should strive to do. Casing the mail in two hours is not a commendable act. Such performances have conse-

quences, none of which are great for us Carriers!

The DEA team does not create numbers to make route additions. The evaluation of *your* performance and *your* 3999 is used to determine any course of action taken. If you consider yourself to be a great caser and you repeatedly demonstrate such actions, you then create a window for a route adjustment.

By casing the two hours and thirty minutes in two hours, how can you then say you have not just created thirty minutes of "under time"?

Many ask, "Why are the good Carriers punished?"

To this I answer, you need only be good at casing and carrying at the level expected and nothing more or less. If your standards are two hours and thirty minutes in the office and five hours and thirty minutes on the street, that is what you should doing as much as possible.

A fair day's work for a fair day's pay is still our creed!

Meeting not exceeding your expectations is still quite fair and may help save that Carrier with no seniority from losing their assignment.

I would like to explain what actually goes into making a decision of whether to add to or reduce a route in more detail.

First, the DEA team assesses the current value of the route. Is this route over eight or below?

This is done by looking at the

current office standards and average street time. Secondly, a consultation is done with the carriers to help determine their opinion of the route. After this information is gathered, a decision is then made as to which street time to use: the average street time, base time (time from previous adjustment) or the 3999. If no 3999 is available or is incorrect, that just eliminates one option that can be used in the decision making process. This only puts a more valuable premium on proper clock rings! The DEA team can choose either of these times or make a choice based on a variant of them all. This evaluation is then sent to the Area team at district where it is either approved or adjusted.

Third, after receiving the go ahead, the DEA team makes the additions or reductions with the assistance of a chosen knowledgeable person from the office being adjusted. All decisions are made by the DEA team only! The assisting person provides valuable information as requested.

Before any final decisions are made, a representative from the management of that office is given the opportunity to review the DEA team's proposed work and offer any insights. Finally, a final consultation is given to the Carriers and the sequencing of routes takes place. This can be done with the assistance of the Carriers or someone from the office. This is the time we expect to be made aware of all mistakes that may have been made, as this is the best time to correct them. Consequently, this is also when "negative" reactions take place.

Let me say to all fellow carriers, the DEA team understands you consider these routes to be "yours"!

Many have carried the same route for countless years. During those years though, they have never encountered the type of loss of mail volume experienced. Our company has never faced the threats it is currently facing.

As a result, the fact that these routes are under the control of a less than cooperative management is a reality that must be faced by all. Carriers: It is not your route!

The NALC is quite elated to be part of a process that gives us equal say in the adjustments as they are being made.

Just imagine the damage management could cause during these perilous times if they were allowed to go unchecked in this adjustment process...

Many of you who cherish that route you call "yours: could lose it in a flash and face having to bid somewhere else because management did not care that a high seniority route needed to be utilized.

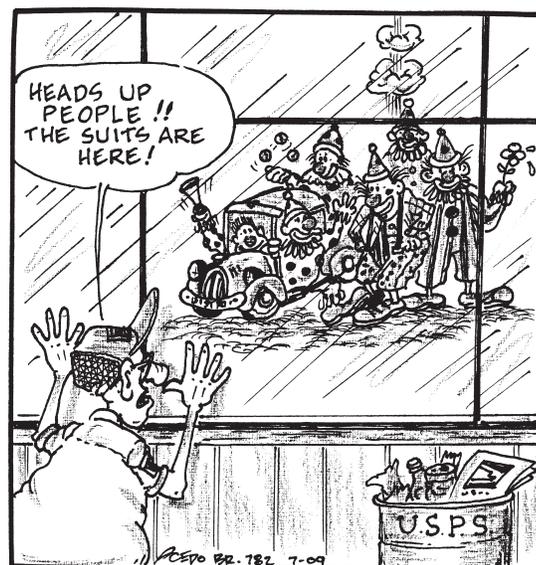
The DEA team avoided such actions numerous times. I fought to keep high seniority routes intact as much as possible. Inevitably, a route that fits the goals of the DEA team is needed and this causes an adverse effect to a Carrier.

Sometimes mounted segments are needed and are exchanged for lesser desired walking. Occasionally, business is given to someone and their apartments are taken. The picking and choosing of what is transferred just

depends on what fits where and how it can best be utilized to square routes and bring them to eight hours. It is management's position that no route should be created to accommodate restrictions—which is also the position of the Union.

I, however, take the stance that any route that is already in existence as a result of the accommodation of a restriction should and will remain as such and any addition will reflect that restriction. The DEA team has not created from scratch any routes for any Carrier with restrictions but has given them additions accordingly.

This process is not an exact science and by far not perfect. In spite of these hurdles and being the backbone of the Postal Service, we as Carriers should show our full support for this inclusive process. It is an invaluable tool that can be exploited to show the dedication we possess and our willingness to be a part of the continuing success and future of *our* USPS!!



A FABLE

Once there was a tribe that had too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The head chief looked at the big picture and declared, "We have too many Indians!"

The big chief thought the tribe would be more profitable if fewer Indians were used on the buffalo hunt. More chiefs were hired to study the work habits of the Indians. Was there some way they could do more during a buffalo hunt? Did they spend too much time in the village before the hunt? There had to be many chiefs to root out the time wasting practices of the Indians. They studied whether very hot weather or the very cold weather and snow could affect the time of the buffalo hunt. The many chiefs decided weather had no bearing on the hunt.

Chiefs were hired to develop new spears and arrows that would help the Indians hunt faster and fewer Indians would be needed. Much wampum was spent on these new tools and more chiefs were hired to bring the tools to the Indians.

With this program in place new Indians were not hired to replace the old Indians who died or were crippled by the rigors of the buffalo hunt. Instead temporary Indians were hired, hungry Indians who often skipped their lunches to make the chiefs happy.

"I was an Indian once," said the chief to his fellow chiefs. "But it was too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter and it was very hard. It is better to be a chief, but if I were still an Indian I would be working much harder than those lazy Indians we now have."

Another chief suggested that they actually go on a buffalo hunt and see what was being done and see what the effect of all those arrows on the back of the Indians was. "No," said the other chiefs. From our big teepee we can study the Indians by the amount of horses they use, the time spent on the hunt and the hides brought back to calculate how long the hunt should last and how many Indians are truly essential.

But the chief persisted in suggesting they go on a hunt and finally this chief was demoted to Indian.

"Sheeesh!" said the head chief. "Now I have even more Indians!" A formula was needed to give them the numbers they wanted—er, I mean the true and unbiased numbers. More chiefs were hired and installed in the large, air-conditioned teepee. By their calculations weather should not affect the hunt because the Indians always rode over the same terrain. The amount of arrows should not affect the time of the hunt because—well, just because. But the biggest breakthrough came when one chief studied his printouts and statistics and came up with the two plus two formula. He could demonstrate that two plus two equaled one. Soon a directive came down from the head chief that any Indian using more than one unit to make four could face discipline.

Slowly the mighty staff of chiefs began to rein in the numbers of Indians. Fewer Indians were sent out with heavier loads until one day the Indians brought back no buffalo hides. Wampum was even scarcer. The Big Chief looked at his mighty staff of chiefs and said, "I know who is responsible for this mess. I am a big enough man to admit it—it is all the fault of those lazy Indians."

The ending of this fable has not been written, but so far it doesn't look very happy. Except, of course, for the head chief. I hear he's got a great retirement package.

JOHN VASQUEZ

Article courtesy of the Columbus, OH *Buckeye Branch 78* published in September 2009

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Branch Officers

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.

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

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

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

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**OFFICIAL NOTICE
OF ELECTION OF
NALC "GOLDEN EMPIRE" BRANCH 782
DELEGATES TO THE 2010 NATIONAL CONVENTION**

By virtue of their positions, Branch 782 President and Vice President shall be delegates to the National Convention.

ELECTION

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 24, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California.

Any member who, for any reason, will be unable to vote on November 24, 2009, may obtain absentee ballots by submitting a signed written request to the Election Committee, Golden Empire Branch 782, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California 93301-1816, at least two weeks before the election. Absentee ballots must be returned to the election Committee by November 23.

Write-in votes are not permitted.

ELIGIBILITY FOR BRANCH FUNDS

Of the delegates from the Bakersfield local area selected to the National Convention, the requirements of eligibility for Convention funds will be; attendance at (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the National Convention.

Of the delegates selected from the outlying Associate Offices (excess of thirty miles from Bakersfield), the requirements of eligibility for convention funds shall be: attendance at least two (2) meetings (any combination of regular General Meetings and/or Quarterly Area Meetings) in the twelve months just prior to the State and National Conventions