

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

### E.A. Baker Union Update

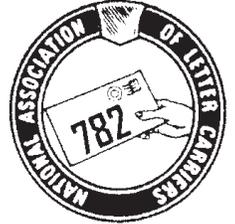


ARVIN  
CALIFORNIA CITY  
McFARLAND  
TAFT

AVENAL  
DELANO  
MOJAVE  
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST  
TRONA

BORON  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
WASCO



**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891**

WEB VERSION

OCTOBER 2013

## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF "NALC GOLDEN EMPIRE BRANCH 782" AND DELEGATES TO THE 2014 STATE CONVENTION AND DELEGATES TO THE 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION

### ELECTION

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 26, 2013 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 26, 2013, may obtain absentee ballots by submitting a signed written request to the following address: Election Committee, Golden Empire Branch 782, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California 93301. Absentee ballots must be requested after nominations have been closed but no later than November 12, 2013.

Write-in votes are not permitted.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR BRANCH FUNDS

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

## 2014 NALC HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN OPEN SEASON November 11th thru December 9th 2013

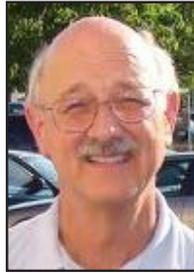
It is here again: "Open Season" for a health benefit plan selection.

***Our Union-owned NALC Health Benefit Plan is just the BEST health benefit plan for our Letter Carrier members!***

Every year, our National Director of Health Benefits and his team negotiate with the federal Office of Personnel Management for the absolute best health care coverage and the best premiums. This year, Director Brian Hellman has provided our Union members with great health benefit package for 2014.

*Continued on page 9...*

at the  
**Mike:**



**I was going to write about the issues at the Post Office but I felt it was important to write something about John Howlett.**

Most of the time, we are focused on the day-to-day living and the issues of work and home. Then we are reminded that all of us are here for a relatively short period of time.

Such was the case when I heard the sad news about the passing of John Howlett on September 26, 2013 at the relatively young age of 67. (Those of you who are young

may wonder about referring to someone John's age as "young", but stay around long enough and you'll understand my point...).

It seems like just yesterday that John retired from the Postal Service where he had carried mail at the Stockdale station but yet it has been almost nine years!

John leaves behind a legacy of a remarkable man who served his country both as a proud member of the United States Marine Corps and as a U.S. Postal Service Letter Carrier.

As everyone who has lost a loved one knows, all the day-to-day worries seem so trivial. My deepest condolences go out to all his immediate family and also his "postal family". Perhaps it will help to ease the sadness to know that he will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

MIKE TOWERY  
NALC Branch 782 President

## In Memorium

**John Arthur Howlett**  
**March 2, 1947 - September 26, 2013**

John Arthur Howlett was born March 2, 1947 in Bakersfield, Ca. A lifelong Bakersfield resident, he attended Potomac Elementary School, Lincoln Jr. High and Bakersfield High School.



He served in the United States Marine Corp. from March 22, 1966 to March 1, 1969 when he then joined the Marines Corp Reserves on February 23, 1972 and served proudly until his retirement. He was a decorated veteran.

John married Sheila Williams on December 1, 1979, two years after they met. Together, they loved and cherished all of their children during their 29 years of marriage. John Howlett began working for the United States Postal Service in 1969. From 1979 until his retirement in 2005, he had the privilege and the pleasure to be the mailman in Quailwood and surrounding communities.

On the evening of September 26th, 2013 the Lord called John home. The cause of his passing was a mild stroke, followed by a heart attack a few days later. John is survived by his sister, his six children, 14 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

A viewing was scheduled for Friday, October 4 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Alma Funeral Chapel, 2130 E. California Avenue, and a memorial service was held Saturday, October 5 at 10am, at RiverLakes Community Church, 4301 Calloway Drive.

Courtesy of the *Bakersfield Californian* published on October 4, 2013

**T**he United States Postal Service defaulted again on a legally required \$5.6 billion payment toward health benefits for retired employees. The failure to make that payment is sure to be cited by those calling for more sacrifice from postal customers and workers. That message will surely come from from USPS management and some members of Congress. But, be clear about this: Congress—*particularly Republicans*—are mostly to blame for the problem.

Congress, in the final days of GOP control of Congress in 2006, passed on a voice vote, a Law which has had profound effects. The Postal Service (***UNLIKE ANY OTHER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE INSTITUTION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***) is bound to pre-fund 75 years of healthcare benefits over a decade. This madness accounts for most of the Post Office's deficit ever since the USPS began making those payments. When pressed, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe testified this month in Congress that the pre-funding made up \$32 billion of USPS' \$41 billion net loss since the requirement went into effect.

Now let's take a look at that remaining \$9 billion in net loss...

In a 2011 study commissioned by USPS, Accenture estimated that by diversifying its services—as other countries' mail agencies have—the Postal Service could've brought in an additional \$74 billion from 2003 to 2008. But the same 2006 law that saddled USPS with the pre-funding requirement also restricted its ability to offer “non-postal services,” as well as its ability to raise the cost of stamps. Hmm...I have a question: Why isn't the PMG pushing for *this* reform instead of going to Congress each and every time asking to cut service and therefore career positions?

“Let's be clear.” Senator Bernie Sanders stated in a Monday email, “During the first 11 months of the current fiscal year, the Postal Service has been profitable delivering mail and packages to every household and business in America.” Sanders added that the “sole reason” for this year's deficit was the “unprecedented and onerous mandate” on pre-funding “insisted upon by George W. Bush.”

In closing, it is my pleasure to congratulate Stockdale Carrier Angele Vega on his retirement effective October 1, 2013. When I transferred into the Carrier Craft in April 2005, I was assigned to the Stockdale Station. It didn't take long before I became part of the break time card game with the guys. Angele and his wife, Connie, also welcomed me into their home for the holidays after the loss of my son. I will forever be grateful for their kindness! Angele, my friend, may you have a wonderful retirement!!

Respectfully,  
JOHN ORTEGA  
Branch 782 Vice-President

# Johnny on the Spot



## “Most Dangerous Jobs; Postal work tops list among federal civilian positions”

This was the front page article in the September 9th *Federal Times*. Andy Medici reports: “On June 29, 62-year old Letter Carrier Bruce Deutser was killed when a pickup truck struck his mail truck in Monkton, MD, flipping it over. Another Letter Carrier, Eddie “Marie” Youngblood, was shot and killed May 17 in Coldspring, Texas. In terms of federal jobs, postal work is by far the most dangerous: Last year,

postal employees constituted a third of all federal civilian employees in the United States who died on the job, according to preliminary numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 2012, 54 feds were killed on the job. Postal workers made up 18 of those in 2012, up from 15 in 2011.

Medici's report continues: Jeffrey Williamson, chief human resources officer and executive vice president at the U.S. Postal Service, said the safety and well being of postal employees is the top priority at the agency. He said the agency strives to ensure employees have the tools and training to perform their duties safely. “Any loss of the hardworking, dedicated men and women of the Postal Service is a terrible loss to our postal

community and to the communities in which our employees serve, Williamson said.

All of you need to be careful out there on the streets—both delivering and walking—as the days get darker earlier and the weather makes the roads slippery and wet.

Now is the time for management to emphasize safety over “making the numbers”. Let's hope 2013 is a much safer year for Letter Carriers here and throughout the United States!

MARK MYERS

Article courtesy of the Seattle, WA  
October 2013 *Seventy-Niner*

# Minutes of the September 2013 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 24th day of September 2013 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga, S.A.N.E. Fred Acedo, Photographer Anita Holderman, Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet, OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the August 27, 2013 were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** An application was received from Rebecca Gomez.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Picnic Chair Teresa Ortega reported, "We are ready to go." The picnic is Sunday, October 13 at Jastro Park. Lunch will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We will be having Laser Tag, Face Painting, the balloon guy, Tug of War, Bingo, Trivia and a dessert bar. Members and family members living in their household are free. Guests are \$13.00. Basil Zuniga reported that last month was the AO's turn. He thanked Norma Hamer and her son for their help. Next month will be Downtown Station's turn. Anita Holderman informed the members that they are welcome to come to the newsletter folding even if it is not their station's turn. Kim Gerdes reported that no books were sold this month. The total books sold are 1267.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Mike Towery opened the nominations for delegates to the State Convention in Burlingame and National Convention in Philadelphia. Nominated as a delegate to the State Convention were: Pam Smith, Darryl Holderman, Paul

Salazar, Mike Meza, Norma Hamer, Shari Sharp, Dianna Herrera, Randy Courson, Anita Holderman, Teresa Ortega, Basil Zuniga, Judy Kiyoshi, Andrew Garcia, Kim Gerdes, Frank Martinez, Debbie Guillet, Lynnel Howell, Teresa Garcia, Mark Ramirez, Danny Blair, Jerry Patterson, Fred Acedo, and Molly Biggar. Nominated as a delegate to the National Convention were: Basil Zuniga, Mike Meza, Norma Hamer, Shari Sharp, Lynnel Howell, Darryl Holderman, Pam Smith, Anita Holderman, Kim Gerdes, Frank Martinez, Randy Courson, Judy Kiyoshi, Jerry Patterson, Debbie Guillet, Andrew Garcia, Diana Herrera, Teresa Garcia, mark Ramirez, Paul Salazar, Molly Biggar, and Deven Patterson. Mike Towery opened the nominations for Branch Officers. Elected by acclamation were: President Mike Towery; Vice President John Ortega; Recording Secretary Kim Gerdes; Treasurer Molly Biggar; Financial Secretary Anita Holderman; MBA/HBP Mark Ramirez; Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. Nominated for Trustee were Danny Blair, Teresa Ortega, Darryl Holderman, Paul Salazar and Frank Martinez. Mike Towery appointed John Ortega to head the Election Committee. The committee will consist of Dicie Wilder, Bob Mitchell, Mike Munoz and Hermie Encinas.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery reported that he appointed Teresa Ortega as Trustee and Norma Hamer as steward for Delano. He reported that union membership for career carriers is 95% and for CCA's it is 57%. Mike Towery discussed the Sunday delivery of Amazon parcels. CCA's from each office will deliver on Sunday. There will be two "hubs" Stockdale will serve Lamont, 09, 07, 04 and 13. Dole Court will serve Shafter, 08, 01, 05 and 06. Amazon expects 99% delivery rate, if we do not provide this service they will take their business elsewhere. He reported that there was a change to the M-41 that the mailer understands that parcels with a "Carrier Release" endorsement will be left even if the area is not secure and in inclement weather. A discussion was held regarding the Sunday delivery. Basil Zuniga read an article from the Br. 2902 newsletter regarding "street Leadership plan." Mike Towery thanked Mabel Bullis for all of her service to the branch as a trustee and steward.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita

Holderman reported that the revised income for September is \$11,667.53

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported

Beginning Balance	\$78,681.82
Dues & Income	\$10,917.61
Interest Income	\$0.00
Total Balance	\$89,599.43
Expenses	\$11,096.31
Ending Balance	\$78,503.12

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Dicie Wilder. The General Meeting Drawing for \$100.00 would have been won by Veronica Rugnao if she had been present.

There were 36 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES

## NON-MEMBER LIST September 2013

**Downtown Station**

Sarah Kirby  
Javier Cruz  
F. Alaniz

**California City**

S. T. Ivory

**Delano**

L.A. Campos  
C.V. Quebral

**South Station**

T.M. Ward  
M. A. Gonzalez  
V. Estrada

**Lamont**

E. Gonzalez

**Brundage/East Bakersfield**

David Kinglee  
R. Chavez

**Ridgecrest**

R. P. Zurn  
S. P. Pierce  
B. J. Leroy  
D. M. Johnson  
C. Celaya  
C. Briede-Newton  
H. G. Blanco

**Hillcrest**

R. A. Richmond  
C. D. Leal  
R. K. Gomez

**Dole Court**

Oscar Salazar  
Dana Morris  
Sharon Hancock

**Shafter**

M. D. Voights  
L. M. New

**Stockdale**

James Oh  
M. Martinez

**Taft**

A.R. Veach  
A.M. Rodriguez  
B. M. Krier  
K. J. Hughes  
T. D. Bullard

**Camino Media**

B. M. Womack  
C. Rodriguez

**Tehachapi**

N. G. Rodriguez  
R. H. Sandorra

**Avenal**

B. Howard

**Wasco**

V. L. Sipe

**We are an "Open Shop".  
MEMBERSHIP IS VOLUNTARY.  
400 Letter Carriers are in  
the complement assigned to cities  
represented by our Branch.  
40 ARE NON-MEMBERS.  
We are 90% organized!**



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



AFL-CIO

# NEWS

## Capital City, Merged Branch No. 86, Hartford, Connecticut

# NEWS

Jul-Aug, 2013

*...Messenger of sympathy and love, servant of parted friends, counselor of the lonely, bond of the scattered family, enlarger of the common life, carrier of news and knowledge, instrument of trade and industry, promoter of mutual acquaintance of peace and good will among men and nations..."*



Michael L. Willadsen, President

## HIRE AND INSPIRE, OR HIRE AND FIRE: CCA DILEMMA

by Michael L. Willadsen, President

With the issuance of the Das arbitration award setting the terms and conditions of our national contract, 2 things stood out: (1) There would no longer be a PTF category of employee when the contract expires in May, 2016, and (2) **City Carrier Assistants (CCA's) would replace both PTF's and TE's.**

One of the main bargaining incentives of the NALC was to obtain a vehicle by which TE's, some of whom had been working for the USPS for 6-7 years, would be able to drive into career appointments and be able to secure medical and retirement benefits and NOT be in a constant state of flux. This occurred with the conversion of existing TE's to CCA's, but a price was paid for this opportunity - but that is NOT the purpose of this article!

When the USPS begins to hire employees, thousands of dollars are spent processing them for employment and then providing them training and orientation for life in the Postal Service. There are many steps in the process, and many management **and** craft employees are utilized along with outside agencies performing background checks, drug tests. etc.

Branch 86 recently hosted a training and rap session for newly hired CCA employees to provide them with a little hands-on training, but most importantly, to elicit feedback from them on how their experience has been thus far!  
**I must say, what an education union officials obtained!**

Newly hired carriers are to accompany a NALC-authorized, and properly trained, OJI (On the Job Instructor). This does or doesn't happen as we struggle to ensure that each of our 42 work locations have OJI's. Also, some Post Offices hire more CCA's at the same time than we have trainers and they then either spend their 3 days with unauthorized trainers or are sent to be trained in other nearby offices. While this latter scenario is the preferred one, something is lost on the new hire when they are not trained in their own office.

I recently sat in on a new hire orientation, and I was shocked that there is no longer any training on the proper methods to case (sort) mail in the morning! (Yes, I know the orientation provided is a national coordinated offering.) However, to make matters worse, once CCA's are sent to their respective offices, they are told to report at 9:30 or 10 A.M. So, they receive NO training on how to case mail, and they receive no on-the-job experience in this important component of our job.

*If you find this incredulous, read on!*

**Probation; what probation:** So, what are they instructed to do if they are reporting to work **after** the sorting and pull-down functions of our jobs are completed? They are told - right out of the box - to deliver an entire route and several hours of "splits" off of other routes! They are told to do the best they can and to be back in the office by a certain time - a time that an experienced regular would have trouble making! The CCA's are then checked on while on the road and reminded of the time they are expected back. Forget the "learning curve" associated with any person beginning work on a new job. CCA's are told they must do whatever is necessary to meet these expectations. i.e. forget the 10-minute breaks, what lunch?, and grit your teeth instead of finding a bathroom.

**Probation; what probation 2:** Management has very clear instructions on how they are to conduct themselves when a new employee is assigned to their office. They are **obligated** to provide clear and concise instructions; they are **obligated** to provide feedback on their observations of the new hires job performance; they are **obligated** to provide evaluations no less than at the 30, 60, & 80 day marks; they are **obligated** to provide additional training as necessary; and, most importantly, they are **obligated** to do all of this in a positive and professional manner! How often does anyone think this happens? How often are the line supervisors provided training on these **obligations**?!?

**Prolonged short-staffing:** The long-term short staffing of all post offices has had a very negative impact on both service and employee morale. I know employees can volunteer to be on the OTDL, but NEVER in anybody's wildest dreams did they ever imagine the obscene amounts that would have to be covered. Working all the OT is only worth it 1 day out of the 14-day pay period - **payday!** The rest of the time, it has a very negative impact on one's state of mind, the diminishing amount of quality time to be spent with family, and the pursuit of hobbies and other life responsibilities. Because the nature of our work tends to break down our bodies, two things can happen; (1) the temptation to "load up" on new employees occurs only in our desire to seek relief for ourselves, and (2) the angst that is caused when overtime becomes less available and we have inadvertently raised our standard of living based on temporary increases in pay. We must do all we can to assist our new CCA brothers and sisters get thru this very unsettling time.

**Mystery injuries:** People get injured while on duty - it is to be expected. This is the reason we have an Office of Workman's Compensation program, and it is why we have the best Branch OWCP Director in the NALC - Arnie Vargas. But, what is a newly hired employee, still within probation, to do when they are told by supervisors and postmasters that they can file the necessary paperwork, but that "...it will probably have a negative impact on their continued employment..." Not strange, and TRUE! These managers who are guilty of this behavior should stop and take a good hard look at the type of human being they have become.

**Not insignificant:** There are other instances of management (mis)behavior which add to the total negative experience of becoming a postal employee. CCA's must request AL or SL outside of those contractual requirements protecting career employees and almost always they are denied! This not only adds to the Stewards workload, but further diminishes CCA's attempts to be patient and have a positive outlook. Also, once CCA's meet the criteria to qualify for uniforms, *why doesn't management simply ensure that it happens instead of adding to the Stewards' workload?*

**Thanks to Arbitrator Das:** All managers, union officials, regular employees, and CCA's must start thinking differently. There are no more TE's! Shortly, there will be no more PTF's! The City Carrier Craft will consist of Regulars and CCA's! Managers need to do a better job of training and inspiring CCA's during this journey. The Union needs to do a better job of assisting CCA's to ensure that they are not being taken advantage of and that they are being given a fair shot at making the delivery of the mails a career. The regulars need to do a better job of assisting CCA's on a daily, workroom floor basis and checking on them on the street. And, CCA's need to feel free to talk to someone about problems with the complete confidence that they will be provided the psychological and physical tools they need to succeed.

**Thanks to the NALC:** Why? Because the CCA's being hired today are the Regular carriers of tomorrow. The CCA's being hired today are tomorrows NALC representatives. They are NOT casuals. They are NOT TE's. They will NOT be PTF's. Except for 2 as of this writing, every CCA hired in a Branch 86 office has joined the NALC and placed their faith in us! As with casuals and TE's before them, Regulars must remember that the only thing keeping them from being treated like CCA's is the union, *our union!*

When we help them, we help ourselves.

This article is courtesy of the Hartford, Connecticut NALC Branch 86 *Capital City News* published in their July-August 2013 edition.

# 2013 NALC HBP Info

## At a glance...



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782 HBP Rep.**  
**(661) 398-6075**

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

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

### Some Websites for You...

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

***Acupuncture!! Must be a state licensed or certified acupuncturist. Chiropractic! State licensed chiropractor or D.O.***

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

# 2014 NALC HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN OPEN SEASON November 11th thru December 9th 2013

*There is a new addition to our NALC Health Benefit Plan this coming year. It is called "NALC VALUE OPTION". The monthly premiums are about half of the NALC high option. I don't have all the particulars of this new Value Option, but I will after I attend the NALC HBP seminar later this month and I will share my information with all of you.*

## The premiums for our High Option will be as follows:

NALC Active Self	\$52.55 biweekly	Annuitant Self	\$161.22 monthly
NALC Self & Family	\$102.43 biweekly	Annuitant & Family	\$327.27 monthly

NALC Value Option Plan	Self	\$27.42 biweekly
NALC Value Option Plan	Family	\$59.54 biweekly

If the Postal Form SF 2809 is available, Active duty members can complete this form and submit it to your supervisor, or you may use the PostalEase website or call 1-877-477-3273. When you call, you will need to have your social security number and your postal ID number. If you do not remember your PIN number, call the same phone number to request it and it will be mailed to you.

health plan does not cover. An example would be dental and vision costs.

MARK RAMIREZ  
"NALC Golden Empire Branch 782"  
Health Benefit Representative

**BENEFEDS.COM**  
November 11th thru  
December 9th

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OUT THERE



# from the editor-guy

I sent a letter to my Congressman on August 26. I received a response which was dated September 23.

I'm not really upset that it took almost a month to receive a reply. Like everyone else, I know that the Republican House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy and Congressman Boehner have other priorities right now than Americans like me.

After *really* reading the Congressman's letter I am confused because I don't think that anybody even read *my* letter.

For some context on some points that I want to make, I decided that in this newsletter I should re-print the letter that I originally sent to Congressman McCarthy and—if you want—you can refer to it on the next page.

After thanking me for my letter, he states, "...As you know the USPS continues to face significant fiscal difficulties...I believe reform is needed."

Okay! He understands what I was pointing out! He is going to support our position in opposition to the approach which Congressman Issa is seeking!

On further reflection, I re-read the letter from Congressman McCarthy and came to the realization that he isn't responding

to anything that I presented in my letter. The second and third sentences in the second paragraph of the Congressman's letter essentially underscore the mentality that the USPS is losing money. There is no acknowledgement of the evidence I presented that the Postal Service is actually making a profit.

In my original letter, I made this statement: "The crisis the USPS faces is one which was birthed by Congress. Current law also obligates the USPS to make additional payments of \$5.7 billion in 2014 and 2015, and \$5.8 billion in 2016, each due by September 30 of each respective year. ***So, in 2017, without the onus of the pre-funding payment, the USPS will manifest a dramatic turnaround in its financial condition.*** (emphasis added)" Of course we're losing money! Thanks, Congress!!

Congressman McCarthy in his letter is presenting his point of view. He's not really responding to my concerns. It's not surprising that we've been facing a government shut down. My current Congressman cares more about his issues than mine...

BASIL ZUNIGA

KEVIN McCARTHY  
23RD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA  
  
MAJORITY WHIP  
  
COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES



**Congress of the United States**  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0523

2421 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE  
BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2915  
  
4100 EMPIRE DRIVE, SUITE 150  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309  
(661) 327-3611  
  
[www.kevinmccarthy.house.gov](http://www.kevinmccarthy.house.gov)

September 23, 2013

Mr. Basil Zuniga  
2412 Hasti Acres Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93309-4734

Dear Basil:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the United States Postal Service (USPS).

As you may know, the USPS continues to face significant fiscal difficulties. Since Fiscal Year 2007, USPS has racked up \$25 billion in losses and most recently failed to make a \$5 billion payment to the U.S. Treasury for its retiree health care plan. The Postal Service is intended to be self-sufficient, but running multi-billion dollar annual deficits and failing to make retiree healthcare payments is unsustainable. I believe reform is needed. However, be assured that as your Representative in Congress, I have noted your comments and will keep them in mind as postal service reform legislation is debated in the House this session.

Thanks again for contacting me on issues of importance to you. If you would like additional information on services my office can provide you, my thoughts and positions on issues facing our nation, and to subscribe to receive periodic "e-newsletters," please visit my website at [kevinmccarthy.house.gov](http://kevinmccarthy.house.gov).

Sincerely,  
  
KEVIN McCARTHY  
Member of Congress

KOM/ka

August 26, 2013

The Honorable Congressman Kevin McCarthy  
RHOB- Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2421  
50 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington DC 20515-0523

Dear Representative:

I am a constituent who is also a Letter Carrier. I write to present some information.

Despite all of the doom and gloom pronouncements about how the USPS is losing billions of dollars, the exact opposite is occurring. The USPS is actually making a profit. Furthermore, without the impact of the Congressionally mandated Retiree Health Benefit prefunding payment, the USPS would have actually produced a substantial bottom line profit to the tune of billions of dollars...

It was on August 09, 2013 that the United States Postal Service published press Release No. 13-063 about postal finances. The title of that release was "Postal Service Actions to Improve Efficiency Help To Lower Third Quarter Loss". I direct your attention to the full text of that release which is available at this web link: [http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2013/pr13\\_063.htm](http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2013/pr13_063.htm).

Two quotes from that press release address an issue that I haven't been hearing about. The first quote states: "Operating expenses of \$16.9 billion compared to \$20.8 billion. The large decrease reflects the fact that this year the Postal Service is accruing amounts for one Retiree Health Benefit prefunding payment *in contrast to two payments last year* (emphasis added)...*The fiscal year-to-date operating expenses are down by \$7.1 billion* (emphasis added) from \$61.0 billion to \$53.9 billion, which represents a decrease of 11.7 percent."

The second quote is cited from the paragraph immediately preceding this first quote: "Operating revenue of \$16.2 billion, an increase of 3.6 percent compared to \$15.6 billion. Revenue for the nine month periods ending June 30, 2013 and 2012 was \$50.2 billion and \$49.5 billion, an increase of 1.3 percent."

The actual financial report "Financial Conditions & Results (10Q) Quarter III FY 2013" can be found at <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/financials/welcome.htm>. The last three paragraphs on page 34 are enlightening in that they point to the fact that the USPS has a surplus and the final paragraph points to this as it states "We believe that OPM should calculate FERS liabilities using Postal Service-specific economic assumptions and demographics as this information would more accurately reflect the lower cost of our future pension obligations. This would, in turn, increase the overfunded amount..."

The crisis the USPS faces is one which was birthed by Congress. Current law also obligates the USPS to make additional payments of \$5.7 billion in 2014 and 2015, and \$5.8 billion in 2016, each due by September 30 of each respective year. So, in 2017, without the onus of the prefunding payment, the USPS will manifest a dramatic turnaround in its financial condition.

I urge you to consider these facts produced by the United States Postal Service in discussions with your colleagues and decisions on votes which impact the USPS.

Please respond to my comments by using one of your franked envelopes and mailing a letter to me at my home address.

Sincerely,

BASIL R. ZUNIGA  
2412 Hasti Acres Drive

**Editor-guy Note:** I shared this letter with my friend John Beaumont. He anticipated and/or predicted the outcome pretty well when he wrote back with this comment on August 27, 2013— "Very detailed and concise. He'll probably shine you on..."



## DEAR BILL (again)...

Though Dear Bill won't be an every month occurrence, I must admit that this month I had a serious case of writer's block. Every idea that I tried, I just couldn't turn it into an article. But, there are always questions out there, so here we go with another installment of Dear Bill. (Again the questioners are fictitious while trying to mention as many of the offices in Branch 3 as possible.)

*Dear Bill:*

*It seems that management is holding us to 5-minutes of office time at the end of the day. It is seemingly impossible to turn in accountable mail, actually finding an accountable clerk to turn them in to, dock your scanner and spying device, process all undelivered mail etc. in 5-minutes. Are they crazy?*

*Nitpicked in Niagara Falls*

Dear Nitpicked:

Yes, they are crazy, because if we all adhered to the M-41 (City Delivery Carrier Duties and Responsibilities) I believe that it would probably take 15-minutes at the end of the day in the office. How many of us do all of these things that this manual tells us to? **Turn in mail keys in exchange for assigned key check or signature clearance; complete form 3821 showing the number of receipts and undeliverable items returned to the clerk...If form is properly completed, clerk will sign and return it to you. This is your receipt, keep it for a 2-year period; follow procedures listed in part 24 to process forwardable and undeliverable mail that you didn't process before leaving the office, and/or that you picked up on the route.** Ok, I haven't seen a key check in years and have never received a signature clearance, and what the hell is form 3821? Undelivered mail includes hold orders etc. You are supposed to put all of this mail in its proper place prior to ending tour. You see, management is so ignorant of the fact that we bring back way more mail than they did when they last carried mail during the Hoover Administration. With DPS and FSS, if you bring back less than 100 pieces, you had a good day. Ask your supervisor for a Form 3821 and laugh at the stupid look on their face when you do. They don't know what it is either.

*Dear Bill:*

*I know that you recently answered a question on the GPS tracking devices. However, I hate the fact that these lowlife's are spying on me. Don't they have anything better to do, like try and fix the problems of the Postal Service instead of running it into the ground?*

*On Edge in Orchard Park*

Dear On Edge:

In my humble opinion, though the spying is very obtrusive and has to be in violation of some kind of human right, in this day and age of micro-micro-micro-micro managing that has

indeed run the place into the ground, it is actually a benefit to the carriers. You see, the people looking at this information haven't put in an honest 8-hour day since they were craft employees, so they think that we are screwing the Postal Service as they are. They think that instead of delivering the mail, you're at the bar with your friend Jim drinking a PBR; or expanding your lunch with your friend Tasty. (There ya go Jim and Tasty, told you I'd work these in somehow.) Now, if questioned, all you have to do is say "look at my GPS." For those of us with nothing to hide, and I'm sure that applies to all of us, this is actually a good thing. They'll see that you were only at lunch for 30-minutes, and were never at Charlie's V-Time Pub during work hours. (And for you Charlie.)

*Dear Bill:*

*I recently heard about the Carrier Alert program that the union is supporting. It sounds like a good idea. What do you think?*

*Wondering in Westfield*

Dear Wondering:

We, as letter carriers, tend to look out for our elderly customers anyway, so how could it hurt? I think it's something that we should all embrace. After all, we serve the public, so we may as well look out for them too.

*Dear Bill:*

*I am a newer Steward. What can I do to file grievances that give us the best chance at winning the dispute?*

*Trying hard in Tonawanda*

Dear Trying:

First of all, you're going to probably run into the problem of not getting enough time to process the grievances. They are obligated to give you the time, so be a pain in their ass about getting it. Now, as for actually filing the grievances, let me give you some of the best advice that someone once gave me: Write the grievance as if the person that will be reading it knows absolutely nothing about the Postal Service. This way, you tend to explain things better. Who, what, when, where and why should all be included. Also, please remember that in discipline cases the burden of proof is on management. On all other contractual issues, that burden is on us. It's not good enough to say that management could have, should have or would have. You have to prove it. Take good notes as things occur, and really think through what you should include to prove your case. As many documents as you can think of that will help the case, including statements from those involved, or those that witnessed a situation are always helpful. Good luck, and thanks for stepping up.

Until next time, this is Bill Campbell, hoping that I'm fully recovered from writer's block.

Article courtesy of the September 2013 Buffalo, New York NALC Branch 3 BUZZ.

If you have an idea  
for a cartoon, contact:

**Fred Acedo**  
**P.O. Box 6532**  
**Bakersfield, CA**  
**93306-6532**



OUT THERE

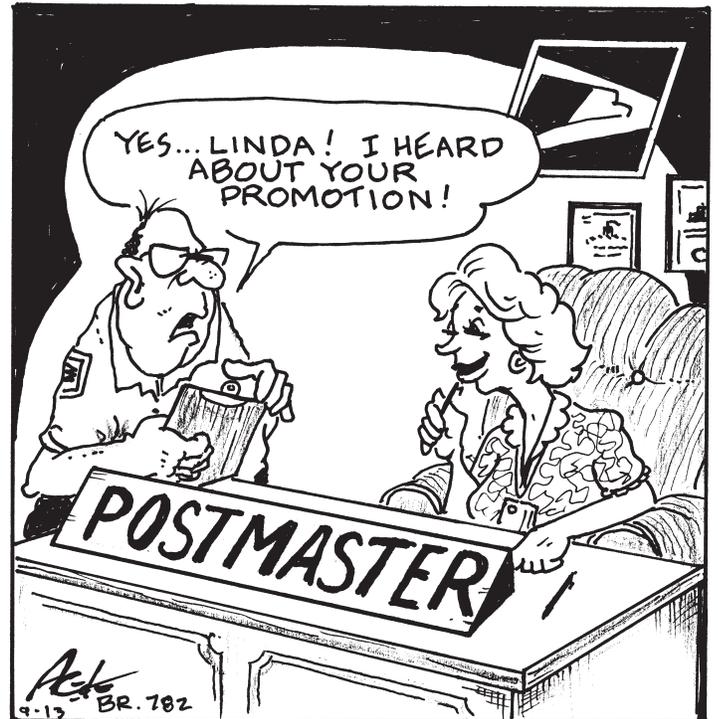


OUT THERE



Editor-guy note: Fred Acedo's work as our Special Assistant Newsletter Editor (S.A.N.E.) is anchored in a world that may be familiar to Letter Carriers wherever we work...

OUT THERE



# Out There...

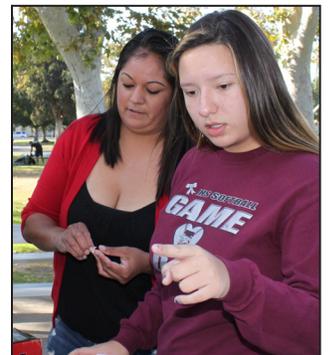


# 2013 NALC Branch 782 Picnic

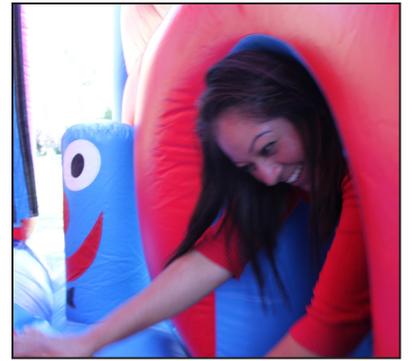
It is a fun time for the kids! It is a fun time for the members! It is a fun time!!!\*

# October 13, 2013

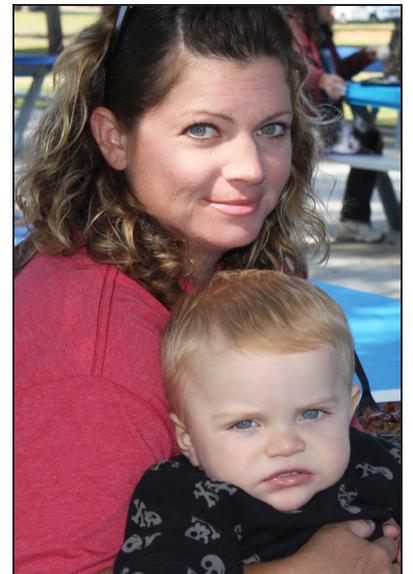
*\*but—for some—it started out as a whole lot of work!!!*



## The weather was great, too!!!



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FOR YOUR MOST  
"Challenging" Supervisor...  
<sup>OR</sup>  
Pain in the A#? Supervisor.....

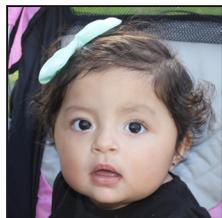




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There were wars, and there were wars...





Thank You, Branch Photographer Anita Holderman!!! You did great!



# 2014 Carl J. Saxsenmeier

## Scholarship Program

The California State Association of Letter Carriers (CSALC) is now accepting applications for the 2014 Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship Program. **All applications must be sent to the Scholarship Chair by January 3, 2014.** The Chair will send scholarship packets to all applicants by the end of January 2014. The scholarships are available to the dependent children or grandchildren of members of NALC Branches within the State of California who have not served in a supervisory capacity in the previous two (2) years from the date of 2013 award announcement. Applicant's parent / grandparent must be a member in good standing of the NALC for at least one year prior to applying. Applicant must be a high school senior when applying. Saxsenmeier Scholarship awards are issued in the year of graduation and are not renewable.

Jeff Parr  
Saxsenmeier Scholarship Chair  
1177 Levine Dr-Santa Rosa, Ca 95401  
707-523-1818

### Saxsenmeier Scholarship Application (Please Print)

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

NALC Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell / Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

NALC Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

**Local NALC Branch Officer Signature required for verification of member in good standing:**

NALC Branch Officer Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Branch Officer Printed Name & Branch  
Number \_\_\_\_\_

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**Doherty & Donelon Scholarship Application  
Is Now Available In Your Postal Record**

# VICE-PRESIDENT

## Beki Serwach



**H**alloween has always been my favorite time of the year. I don't know if it's because I grew up being "frightened" by my oldest brother Mark or if it's because of all the diverse costumes and decorations. Either way, I love Halloween. When we came home from trick or treating we would all sit on the floor and count our candy to see who got the most. My mom would go through it and take out the unsafe pieces and sometimes we would trade for something better with one another.

We had eight kids in my family so you can imagine the fun we had running up and down the streets with our pillowcases stuffed with candy, chips and loose change. I remember being thrilled when I got pennies, but nickels were always a bonus and I was sure that nickel came from a rich person. Oh, the days of youth!

I was 19 years old the last time I trick or treated with my friends. now I go out with my nephew Ty. I still miss the children we went out to eat afterward in our costumes. For me it's not about the candy anymore, it's about the excitement I see in Ty's face as he gets his treats and yells "c'mon Aunt B. come with me to the door", and together we call out "trick or treat". We tried just hanging out at my house to pass out candy last year but we ended up going out after all because it's just too much fun.

Sometimes, I get that same feeling when I put on my uniform. I feel like I'm dressing up to go door to door again, and maybe a small part of me feels the nostalgia of being a kid and running to meet the mailman at the mailbox wondering if I won the contest I entered on the back of the Frosted Flakes box.

Ultimately, working for the USPS is like trick or treating. I put on a costume and I walk the neighborhood meeting all kinds of diverse people, some of them are even scary looking. I carry a bag that is filled with goodies; they're just being given away instead of given to me. Now I call out "postal service" or "mailman" when I get to the door. Sometimes, I even do a trick, with the scanner of course, while I'm juggling my flats, DPS and holding the parcel I'm attempting to capture the scan on in the bright sunshine. I can do all that and talk to the patron at the same time; wishing them a great day and thanking them for appreciating my skills and saying I make it look so simple and somehow fun.

Have you noticed that most people think we have the best job, strolling along on a sunny day with nary a care in the world? I'm sure, they too, feel like it's Halloween sometimes when they look out the door and we look like drowned rats or popsicles, or worse yet, at least for me, like Moses walking in the desert in the sweltering heat drenched in sweat. It's not a pretty sight. They comment on our costumes, "don't you look cute"... "you look awful"... "nice hat, going on a safari?" And then finally, they give us our treats, an ice-cold coke, iced tea or glass of water. Some give us zucchini bread, cookies, candy. Some give us a bottle of bubbly if we're really talented, NON-alcoholic, of course. Cheers! Others give us hugs and sometimes give us kisses.

When we return to our offices we share our treasures and trade our stories. We tell each other secrets and compare the nightmares of our day. We are comprised of princes and princesses, witches and hags, dwarfs and giants, saviors and devils. We all get dressed up and play a role in this delightful kingdom we call the postal service. We are fueled by diversity and imagination and joined by a strength called unionism that is a shield worn with honor. Our colors are blue, and our mascot the eagle, but each of us is a piece of the network, the family, just like mine when I was a kid. We're running up and down the streets, bringing home our nickels and pennies, we're even frightened these days in a world of uncertainty. What we are not is alone.

In some offices we're a family of eight, in others we're a family of 80, others yet even more. We've watched each others kids grow up and, sadly, sometimes pass away. We've attended weddings, graduations, ball games and picnics together. We've raised money for MDA, CFC and Customer Connect. We've donated kidneys and bone marrow and sent needed supplies to our servicemen and women overseas.

We are a union in every sense of the word. We may not always see eye to eye, we may not share the same faith or political views, but when it comes to our jobs we stand together as one voice fighting for all of our brothers and sisters, the customers we serve and the service we believe in. We have to because if we don't do it, who will?

**BEKI SERWACH**

Article courtesy of the Center Line, Michigan NALC Branch 4374 *Front Lines* published in October 2013.

# Who's Watching? ———by Chuck Glover (Burnsville)

During a recent service talk at the Burnsville Post Office we were introduced to the GPS/Bluetooth phones. Customer service was the reason for the bluetooth uplink. I replied that the real reason for the phones was to monitor a carriers movements, and was told by management that if I wanted to only look at the *darkside*, carriers could be tracked by computer. Well, Mr. Manager, carriers ARE being tracked by our esteemed supervisors. Costumer service is the last thing on their minds.

What is currently happening at UPS is an ominous sign of what will happen at the USPS, all in the name of *Customer Service*.

From: Labornotes.org, March 25, 2013

## SURVEILLANCE

Working conditions have long been the stick in the craw of well-paid UPS drivers. The company's tight control of their every move puts them amount the most regimented workers in the country outside those on an assembly line. Every second of a driver's day is monitored, through GPS, the touch-screens where customers sign for packages, and "telematics" – 200 sensors mounted on each truck (in UPS lingo, a "package car").

Supervisors know what time a driver got out of his truck to deliver a package, how long it took to get the customers signature, and how long to drive to the next stop. They know each

time a driver backs the truck up – a violation of the UPS "methods." They know about "harsh braking" and the amount of time the truck is idling. Nichele Fulmore a steward in Lumberton, North Carolina, says, "They know when the car cranks off, they know when you shut the door, when you scan that package. They can pinpoint you."

Matt Taibi, a driver in Providence, Rhode Island, says some managers post drivers' telematics readings, to show the worst offenders on each issue. And the telematics reports provide fodder for zealous managers. "You can go through anybody's records and find something," says Fulmore. "Some managers want to pick out a minute here and a minute there" to question employees about. "As a steward, I step in and say 'that's ridiculous.'"

Now UPS is rolling out what TDU calls "telematics on steroids." As it stands now, drivers are told, electronically, what order of stops to follow for the day. Under ORION, the technology – or a manager – will rearrange the route as the day progresses, taking even more decision-making out of the drivers hands.

## DISHONESTY

Besides surveillance and overtime, the other issue for UPS drivers is what the company calls "dishonesty." They mean it to mean everything," Cohen says. "They've categorized everything that doesn't go by their rules and standards as being dishonest, and for that they are terminating people on the spot, with no progressive discipline."

Cohen gives an example: A driver knows she's too far away from a store on her route to get there before closing time. So she keys in "closed." If the customer complains, the worker is fired for dishonesty. Cohen says a warning would be the appropriate response – especially since supervisors often counsel drivers to take this shortcut. Language added in the last contract allows management to fire drivers based solely on information gleaned from technology. This year the union proposed that such discipline be disallowed.

Can you see the handwriting on the wall?

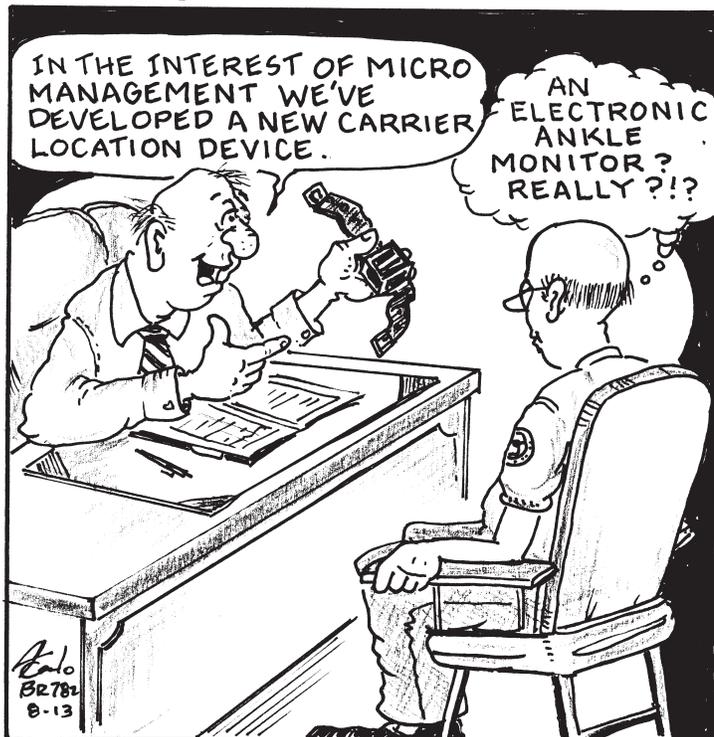
The National Settlement (M-01458) states that *MSP data may not constitute the sole basis for disciplinary action*, however coupled with the GPS/Phone, some over enthusiastic managers, who try to brown nose their way up the corporate ladder, will use the data to question carriers productivity. As the management creed goes, "*the numbers don't lie, only carriers do.*"

The average carrier probably figures that if managers will just leave them alone, they will just get the routes done in time. Cutting corners on your route will show up on their reports. Do not believe for one minute that a manager cares about your well-being. They live and breathe DOIS, and other nonsensical acronyms. Only the union is concerned for your career.

Be safe, be consistent, be professional, and management won't have cause to discipline.

This cartoon originally appeared in the September 2013 *NALC BRANCH 782 UNION UPDATE*, but it was worth another look with this info...

## OUT THERE



Article courtesy of the Buffalo, New York NALC Branch 3 *BUZZ* published in October 2013.

# The Vice-President's Message: My Union Story

By Jerry Fitzsimmons, Vice-President

My career with the US Postal Service began on Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1984. I was a PTF assigned to the old Lents Station (dungeon). I made it through my probationary period and remained a PTF for a total of 18 months. It was an incident that happened during those 18 months that actually defined the rest of my career.

About 7 months after I started, I was delivering mail on a particularly wet and nasty day in January. I was at the second to the last stop on the dismount route I was delivering that day. After I had placed the mail in the box on the porch, I was headed back down the driveway to the Jeep. The driveway was very steep, wet, and was not paved. My right foot slipped and I stumbled a little and I heard and felt my knee pop (this right knee had always given me trouble since a kneecap dislocation back in High School).

It was slightly sore but I knew from past experience with this knee that in an hour or so it was gonna swell up and be useless for a few days. The last delivery had no mail so I proceeded back to the station that was only a couple blocks away. Before unloading the jeep I went into the station and told my supervisor what had happened. The Station Manager was listening from his office and he came out and started asking me questions in a very heated manner.

"Why didn't you immediately report this accident?" he said. I told him that it only happened less than 5 minutes ago and the nearest pay phone was farther away than the station. He then asked me, "Were you fingering mail as you walked down that driveway?" I informed him that I was not fingering mail as I only had one outgoing piece of mail in my hand at the time. He then gave me the CA-1 accident report form, and I filled it out, and then drove myself to the Dr. after I clocked out. The Dr. took X-Rays and told me what I already knew, that my knee was strained and I should limit walking for a week.

So I went on limited duty for a week and then back to full duty (I never took a day off). The day I went back to full duty, I was brought into the office with my steward for an investigative interview and then at the end of the day I was issued a letter of warning for being "inattentive to duty." I immediately gave the LOW to my shop steward.

A little over two weeks later my shop steward came into my case and told me that he was sorry, but he had not filed a grievance within the 14-day time limit. I asked him what that meant, and he said that I would be stuck with that letter of warning in my personnel file for

the next 2 years.

Well I can tell you that I wasn't very happy about that and voiced my displeasure to anyone who would listen. One of the old timers in the office said I should go to the next Steward Council meeting, and learn what my rights were.

So I found out that the next steward council meeting was the next night so after work I headed down to the old school in SE Portland where they held the Br. 82 steward council meetings every month. I wasn't sure I was in the right spot so when I got in line I asked the guy with the ponytail ahead of me if I was at the right place for steward's council. He turned around and said "yes I was in the right spot" and then he introduced himself. He said "hi I'm Jim Cook, what office do you work in". I told him my name and that I worked at the Lents station as a PTF and I was attending to learn my rights as a letter carrier. He went with me into the meeting and helped me understand everything that the trainers were talking about and said if I ever needed help to give him a call.

Well that started a relationship that prompted me to run for alternate steward in Lents and then again later in Parkrose where I held my first bid assignment. I eventually became the lead steward at Parkrose and then I ran for an E-Board at large position a few years later.

About 27 years after that first meeting with Jim Cook, I was elected to be his Vice President at Branch 82. I consider it an honor and a privilege to have worked with Brother Cook for all these years and it would never have happened without that first Letter of Warning I received.

My point in this message is that I never really thought about being this involved with the Union when I first got hired, but the great people I have met and got to work with inspired me to become a Steward and Union Officer. So I say to you: Ask not what your Union can do for you..... Ask what you can do for your Union to make it stronger. And the first thing you can do is to Work Smart, Work Safe so you can Retire Healthy. And if you get the chance to become more involved with your Union please step up, because it is Your Union as much as it is mine.



# Failure to Follow Instructions

by Phil Dufek, Vice -President  
NALC Branch 576

“**Failure to Follow Instructions**” sounds as if it is one step shy of insubordination and is almost always attached to unrealistic expectations and demands from management whose mandatory compliance is an impossibility.

For instance, when Carriers call in from the street because they are running late they are told, “You are to deliver all the mail, be off the street by 6pm and overtime is NOT authorized.”

The dilemma is that the Carrier called in because they are unable to deliver all the mail and be off the time Management demands. Some Carriers have already skipped their lunch and given up breaks in an attempt to make it and fly under the radar. In most situations, Carriers know they will be grilled by Management only because Management is ticked because the Carrier is not living up to their expectations.

Even seasoned active veteran Carriers like Rick M. and Mike T. sometimes fall into the trap of trying to do a little more and give up part of a lunch or break. However, they quickly remember that skipping lunches and breaks isn’t an option. When they do, they are PAYING the Postal Service to deliver mail rather than being PAID by the USPS.)

And, guess what?

Management doesn’t appreciate the sacrifice but rather expects even MORE done the next day...

One thing to not say when calling in from the street is how much time you need to complete your route. There’s no way to know if an accident/train/etc. will cause a further delay when returning to the station or if a customer will have questions.

The best response is, “I will do my best.” If pushed for how much time you need, make it clear you can ONLY make your best GUESS. You will only know for sure after you’ve returned.

If told to curtail a coverage (and you know that it still won’t be enough and you still won’t make it), ask this question: “What do you want me to do with the rest of the mail?”

Once you’ve been told to deliver the mail, even if “overtime isn’t authorized”, don’t worry that you won’t be paid. M-00326 says overtime is inherently authorized in the instructions to continue delivery. Also, Federal Law requires you to be paid for performing work whether or not Management said it wasn’t authorized. However, remember this important point: *When you are NOT performing your duties (delivering, driving, sorting, etc.) and Management witnesses it, and completes the proper forms, overtime pay for that time can be withheld.*

**DO NOT** return with undelivered mail (except in case of medical restrictions) without specific authorization to do so. Any time you receive the authorization, complete a PS Form 1571 upon your return. The “1571” is a “Curtailed Mail Report”. Once you’re off-the-clock, write yourself a note about the details (time, name of supervisor, instructions and you might want to make sure that you make a copy of the 1571.

**Failure to Follow Instructions** is almost always included when Management charges us for a perceived failing in our duties and responsibilities. Charges range from attendance, calling in from the street, MSP failures, or Unsatisfactory Work Performance.

In **EVERY** discipline case, Management bears the burden of proof. We are NOT automatically guilty. The NALC is there to provide you with help in your defense.

If you request a Shop Steward, Management *must* provide access to the Steward before they continue to ask questions.

Additionally, if you are asked to participate in a “Fact Finding” there are a few

things to remember. The investigation must be both “thorough and objective”.

In answering questions, show how duties were performed in a safe manner and how the instructions were followed. When the instructions were impossible (“Deliver all the mail, be off the street by 6pm and overtime is NOT authorized.”)

Management has to prove that this

## OUT THERE



“BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY, SHE’S NOT AS DUMB AS SHE LOOKS.”

could have been accomplished in a safe manner ANDF that we were aware of that.

To date, DPS, FSS and DOIS have not delivered one piece of mail. Only Carriers deliver mail.

We are required to deliver the mail in a safe manner and are paid by the hour to accomplish our duties.

An agreed upon contractual issue is important to also remember—

**Article 34 A: “The principle of a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay is recognized by all parties to this Agreement.**

Knowledge is power. Pass it along.

Article courtesy of the Phoenix, AZ  
NALC Branch 576 Carrier  
published in September 2013.



# Branch Officers

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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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Avenal (93203)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Arvin (93209)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
Delano (93215)	Gracie Silva	(661) 325-5526
Lamont (93241)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
McFarland (93250)	Bonnie Whitbey	(661) 302-7354
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Taft (93268)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Wasco (93280)	Jerry Patterson	(661) 699-2462
Downtown Station (93301)	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
South Station (93304)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 487-5353
South Station Alternate	Judy Kiyoshi	(661) 817-5529
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar	(661) 327-7637
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Pam Smith	(661) 979-5854
Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Dole Court (93308)	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Dole Court (93308)	Shari Sharpe	(661) 364-5544
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Mojave (93501)	Vacant	
California City (93504)	Russell Day	(760) 373-8963
Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93526)	Vacant	
Tehachapi (93561)	Mary Morphis	(661) 822-6614
Trona (93562)	Lynnell Howell	(760) 371-1039
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**Rick Plummer, Webmaster**



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

# General Meeting

**Tuesday**  
**October 22, 2013**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Branch 782 Office  
 2628 "F" Street  
 Bakersfield, California

**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

Branch 782 S.A.N.E. Fred Acedo finds his inspiration in many different locations. He recently read something in the *Bakersfield Californian*.

"Continuing its cost-cutting efforts, the U.S. Postal Service is planning to offer early retirement to thousands of employees at the management and executive levels, according to a group with knowledge of the discussions..."

## OUT THERE

