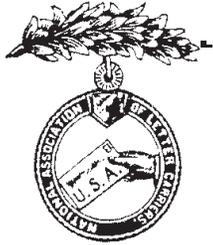


National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 11

WEB VERSION

NOVEMBER 2017

From a series of murals at the corner of 20th and Eye Street in Bakersfield, California



**THIS VETERANS' DAY
NOVEMBER 11, 2017
WE HONORED
ALL WHO
HAVE SERVED
OUR COUNTRY**

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ELECTION OF NALC "GOLDEN EMPIRE" BRANCH 782 DELEGATES TO THE 2018 NATIONAL NALC CONVENTION

ELECTION

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 15, 2017 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 15, 2017, 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 14.

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 ten (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 National Conventions.

It's been an extremely busy time with the on-going process of Local Negotiations and conducting the other business of the Branch. So... the LMOU negotiations deal with:

ARTICLE 30 LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION

A. Presently effective local memoranda of understanding not inconsistent or in conflict with the 2016 National Agreement shall remain in effect during the term of this Agreement unless changed by mutual agreement pursuant to the local implementation procedure set forth below or, as a result of an arbitration award or settlement arising from either party's impasse of an item from the presently effective Local Memorandum Of Understanding (LMOU).

B. *There shall be a 30-day period of local implementation to commence October 16, 2017* on the 22 specific items enumerated below, provided that no LMOU may be inconsistent with or vary the terms of the 2016 National Agreement:

Additional or longer wash-up periods.

The establishment of a regular work week of five days with either fixed or rotating days off.

Guidelines for the curtailment or termination of postal operations to conform to orders of local authorities or as local conditions warrant because of emergency conditions.

Formulation of local leave program.

The duration of the choice vacation period(s).

The determination of the beginning day of an employee's vacation period.

Whether employees at their option may request two selections during the choice vacation period, in units of either 5 or 10 days.

Whether jury duty and attendance at National or State Conventions shall be charged to the choice vacation period.

Determination of the maximum number of employees who shall receive leave each week during the choice vacation period.

The issuance of official notices to each employee of the vacation schedule approved for such employee.

Determination of the date and means of notifying employees of the beginning of the new leave year.

The procedures for submission of applications for annual leave during other than the choice vacation period.

The method of selecting employees to work on a holiday.

Whether "Overtime Desired" lists in Article 8 shall be by section and/or tour.

The number of light duty assignments within each craft or occupational group to be reserved for temporary or permanent light duty assignment.

The method to be used in reserving light duty assignments so that no regularly assigned member of the regular work force will be adversely affected.

The identification of assignments that are to be considered light duty within each craft represented in the office.

The identification of assignments comprising a section, when it is proposed to reassign within an installation employees excess to the needs of a section.

The assignment of employee parking spaces.

The determination as to whether annual leave to attend Union activities requested prior to determination of the choice vacation schedule is to be part of the total choice vacation plan.

Those other items which are subject to local negotiations as provided in the craft provisions of this Agreement.

Local implementation of this Agreement relating to seniority, reassignments and posting.

C. All proposals remaining in dispute may be submitted to final and binding arbitration, with the written authorization of the National Union President or the Vice President, Labor Relations. The request for arbitration must be submitted within 10 days of the end of the local implementation period. However, where there is no agreement and the matter is not referred to arbitration, the provisions of the former LMOU shall apply. The parties may challenge a provision(s) of an LMOU as inconsistent or in conflict with the National Agreement only under the following circumstances:

Any LMOU provision(s) added or modified during one local implementation period may

be challenged as inconsistent or in conflict with the National Agreement only during the local implementation period of the successor National Agreement.

At any time a provision(s) of an LMOU becomes inconsistent or in conflict as the result of a new or modified provision(s) of the National Agreement.

At any time a provision(s) of an LMOU becomes inconsistent or in conflict as the result of the amendment or modification of the National Agreement subsequent to the local implementation period.

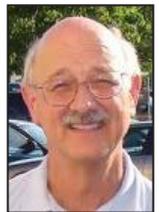
In such case, the party declaring a provision(s) inconsistent or in conflict must provide the other party a detailed written explanation of its position during the period of local implementation, but no later than seven (7) days prior to the expiration of that period. If the local parties are unable to resolve the issue(s) during the period of local implementation, the union may appeal the impasse to arbitration pursuant to the procedures outlined above. If appealed, a provision(s) of an LMOU declared inconsistent or in conflict will remain in effect unless modified or eliminated through arbitration decision or by mutual agreement.

D. An alleged violation of the terms of an LMOU shall be subject to the grievance-arbitration procedure.

E. When installations are consolidated or when a new installation is established, the parties shall conduct a thirty (30) day period of local implementation, pursuant to Section B. All proposals remaining in dispute may be submitted to final and binding arbitration, with the written authorization of the National Union President or the Vice President, Labor Relations. The request for arbitration must be submitted within 10 days of the end of the local implementation period.

F. Where the Postal Service, pursuant to Section C, submits a proposal remaining in dispute to arbitration, which proposal seeks to change a presently-effective LMOU, the Postal Service shall have the burden of establishing that continuation of the existing provision would represent an unreasonable burden to the USPS

at the
Mike:



Before beginning serious preparations for local negotiations, all members of the branch's bargaining team must understand both Article 30 itself and how Article 30 relates to the rest of the National Agreement.

Both management and the NALC are obligated to bargain over each of the 22 subject items listed in Article 30. This means that if one party raises such an item in negotiations, the other must negotiate over it in good faith.

Management may claim in local negotiations that it "cannot" bargain over subjects outside the 22 listed items or that such items are "outside the scope of local implementation." That is plainly wrong, but it makes no practical difference whether management says that it can not, or says that it will not, bargain over subjects outside the 22 items. In either case, management may refuse to address those subjects in local negotiations.

Certain subjects in local negotiations may be "impasse." That is, when an impasse occurs—a failure to reach agreement in local negotiations—the union or management may appeal the dispute for resolution in arbitration, subject to certain rules.

The Impasse Rules: Although either party may impasse an item in local negotiations, management's right to impasse is strictly limited. Here are the impasse rules:

Either party may impasse an item.

Only a subject within Article 30's 22 items may be impasse.

Where management submits a proposal to arbitration to change an existing local memo provision, it has the burden of establishing that continuation of the existing provision would represent an unreasonable burden to the USPS. (There is no such burden on the union when it seeks to change a local memorandum.)

So a branch cannot simply "keep what it has" in the local memo by refusing to agree to change existing language and refusing to bring the matter to impasse. Management can bring the item to impasse and attempt—by arguing that the existing provision is

an "unreasonable burden" on the Postal Service—to initiate a change on its own. Despite this heavy burden on management, branches should anticipate that many postmasters will seek to impasse existing local memo provisions.

Local negotiations represent a unique opportunity for the branch to "organize" its members around issues that are important to them. Although the branch may seldom hear from many union members, every Letter Carrier has a stake in at least some local issues—how vacations are scheduled, how the local leave program works and so forth.

Membership support is the source of the branch's bargaining power and should be cultivated during the local negotiations process. You can also use local negotiations to increase participation in the branch and build appreciation for the union's efforts.

Communications is the key to membership participation and support. The bargaining committee should create a plan for communicating with members—before, during and after the negotiations. Local negotiations represent a unique opportunity for the branch to "organize" its members around issues that are important to them.

Source: *A Guide To Local Negotiations Under Article 30 Of The National Agreement*

Each and EVERY month, Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage YOU to come to our Meeting*

This month YOU could win \$400!

*THE FINE PRINT: To win the money YOU have to be present when YOUR name is drawn...just like Art Mooney was in March!!

"An injury to one is an injury to all..."

Our members have experienced devastating losses to their homes in the Fires in Sonoma and Napa County. In the blink of an eye, many of my members were fleeing for their lives when the fire storm hit Santa Rosa early Monday morning.

The fire jumped across a 6 lane freeway and ignited a neighborhood. ***So far, ten Carriers have lost their homes and we are hoping this will be the last!***

We are setting up a fund to assist our Brothers and Sisters — which includes Retirees — to help them get back on their feet. If you would like to assist, please mail a check to: **Branch 183 Fire Relief, 888 3rd Street, Santa Rosa CA 95404**

Please make sure any checks are made out to NALC Branch 183 and in the memo write "Fire Relief"

I can be reached at (707) 318-1821 for further information.

In Unionism,
JERRY ANDERSEN,
President, Branch 183



Minutes of the October 2017 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:01 p.m. on the 25th day of October, 2017 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, Frank Martinez. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Dole Ct. Downtown, East Bakersfield, Edwards, Hillcrest, Lamont, McFarland, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Photographer, Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer, Debbie Guillet, Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer; OWCP Representative, Rick Gerdes and Frank Martinez and Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes of the September 27, 2017 meeting were read. The minutes were corrected to read that Steven Blanton had not attended at 6 Day Route Inspection class. Mike Towery added that the minutes should reflect that Maria Valenzuela also attend the LMOU Training Class. The minutes were accepted as amended. Secretary Kim Gerdes read an e-mail from Assistant Business Agent Calvin Brookins requesting donations to members of Br. 183 who were affected by the wildfires in Napa, Santa Rosa, Sonoma and Ukiah.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications for membership were received from Christy Megia, Delano; Daniel Scott, Ridgecrest; Todd Pitcher and Luis Hernandez, Dole Ct.; Anthony Herrera and Kahrin Burdick, Tehachapi; Dolores, Beneavente, Stockdale;

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Teresa thanked everyone who helped and all the volunteers. She thanked Paul, especially who helped with EVERYTHING. Thanks to Mike Meza, BBQ; Pam and Vince who took care of the LCPAC sign up; Norma, MDA raffle; Gilroy, 50/50 Drawing; Tami, games. She also thanked Shari, Denise, Bonnie, Randy, Mike Towery, John, Molly and Kim. Basil Zuniga reported on the newsletter, he thanked Tami Foshee who forwarded him a Facebook story about a carrier at Dole Ct., Bonnie Whitbey who forwarded a Facebook story about the fires in Northern California. He asked that everyone send \$5.00, it is not a lot for each of us but would mean a lot to the carriers affected. He discussed the Special Veterans Day article in the web version. Because of the amount of information he did a "stand alone" newsletter for the Veterans and encouraged members to check it out. He discussed an article about a pilot program in Florida and Portland in which Amazon will begin to deliver their own parcels. Mike Towery thanked Basil for the great job he did on the Veteran's Day issue, the web version is "excellent." Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee reported that he was informed by Teresa Espinoza that proceeds from all recycling at each station

should be going to the Social and Recreation Committee. Frank Martinez has free tickets to the BC football game on Saturday at 6 p.m. Kim Gerdes reported that two books were sold which leaves a balance of 636. Mark Ramirez discussed his newsletter article about the NALC Health Benefit Plan. He reminded members that the plan is Union owned and "not for profit."

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: John Ortega reported that the By-Laws Committee has been selected and will meet and have a recommendation at the next meeting. Mark Ramirez reported that Retiree, Gilbert Ochoa is ill and he has a get well card he would like members to sign. Basil Zuniga reported that Retiree, Teddy Martinez is also ill. He is in the ICU, but is doing better.

NEW BUSINESS: Molly Biggar made a motion to cater dinner for the December 20th meeting with a budget of \$500. Teresa Ortega seconded the motion and it was passed. Mike Towery requested that members bring either a dessert or drinks to the dinner. Mike reported that the Business Agent would like to have a "New Steward Training" at our office. It would include stewards from Visalia, Porterville and Tulare. John Ortega discussed the Postal Employees' Relief Fund to help fellow Postal employees affected by natural disasters. Contributions can be made through the Combined Federal Campaign.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that the Steward meetings for November will be on the 1st and the 8th.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$13,691.49 was collected for the month of October, 2017.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported for the month of July:

Beginning Balance	\$71,517.62
Dues and Income	\$13,133.02
Total Balance	\$84,650.64
Expenses	\$ 4,954.38
Ending Balance	\$79,696.26

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Norma Hamer, who donated her winnings to MDA.

The Drawing for \$350.00 would have been won by Vanessa DeLuna if she had been present.

There were 46 members present and 1 guest.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Non-Members September 2017*

Downtown Station
Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz

South Station
100% UNION!!!

Brundage/East Bakersfield
100% UNION!!!

Hillcrest
100% UNION!!!

Dole Court
100% UNION!!!

Stockdale
James Oh
Marty Martinez
Daniel Zuniga

Camino Media
100% UNION!!!

Arvin
100% UNION!!!

Avenal
100% UNION!!!

California City
100% UNION!!!

Delano
Cynthia V. Quebral
Daniela Barreto

Lamont
100% UNION!!!

Edwards AFB
Varline Reeder

Mojave
Alexander Keller

Ridgecrest
100% UNION!!!

Shafter
M. D. Voights
L. M. New

Taft
K. J. Hughes

Tehachapi
B. C. Den Beeman

Trona
100% UNION!!!

Wasco
100% UNION!!!

**CCA names are in italics*

**There are only 13
non-members in
all of the cities we
serve... Two of
them are CCAs.**

Securing benefits for all Letter Carriers through the negotiation of Local Memoranda is a long and arduous process. At every one of our units, each NALC member pays for the benefits. Non-members ride free...

Fred "Duke" Dominguez

March 2, 1936 – September 26, 2017

"Duke", 81, attended Our Lady of Guadalupe school and graduated from Garces High in 1956 as Senior Class



President. He retired from the US Post Office after 41 years and from the Rice Bowl after 36 years. He was a member of the 4H Sheep Committee of the Kern County Fair for 39 years, was a member of the Bakersfield Charro Association and he coached G.B.A. and Cub Scouts baseball.

Fred leaves behind a loving wife, Rachel, married 51 years, 6 children, John (Cindy), Daniel (Kim), Fred, Jr., Ramon, Yvonne (Chuck) Diana (Cosme), (Gary), 17 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great-grandchild. Fred, the eldest of 5 children, also leaves behind brothers, Ray (Donna), Ben (Nora), sisters Carmen (Bob), Beda, and numerous nephews and nieces.



A funeral Mass was held October 19, 2017 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on East California Avenue.

Published in the *Bakersfield Californian* on October 17, 2017

from the editor-guy

Some of y'all may wonder why this particular obituary was featured... While "Duke" did carry mail for a short time during the early part of his early postal career, he retired as a long-time Clerk who worked at many of Bakersfield's units and the Annex.

Well, posting information like this is done out of respect to the many long-serving NALC Retirees who have chosen to move away from the city where they worked. They no longer have the opportunity to look over obituararies in our local newspaper. (Yes. Even if it seems a little morbid, many Retirees religiously check obits on a daily basis. Making sure they're not listed???)

I wanted to give them — and you — a chance to acknowledge the passing of someone who was here for a long time!

BASIL ZUNIGA



Coming in February

The NALC LCPF

The Letter Carriers Political Fund (LCPF) is here in order to:

- Allow NALC to support political leaders and groups in both parties who defend Letter Carrier benefits and protect Letter Carrier jobs.

- Give NALC the opportunity to show our friends in Congress who have supported us in the past that we appreciate the work they have done and encourage their continued support.

- Provide NALC the opportunity to support policies that are favorable to all working people – defending social security, improving health care benefits, and strengthening collective bargaining rights.

LCPF is a Non-Partisan PAC:

- That contributes to candidates that are supportive of Letter Carrier issues regardless of their party.

- LCPF contributions have gone to a diverse group of elected officials from Minnesota Democrat Senator Al Franken to South Dakota Republican Representative Kristi Noem.

The interests LCPF protects are:

- ➔ A strong USPS.
- ➔ Job security for Letter Carriers.
- ➔ Affordable health care benefits.
- ➔ Fair and livable wages.
- ➔ Safe and secure pensions.

The ballot box and bread box are connected. As federal employees, Congress has oversight of nearly all aspects of Letter Carrier jobs. Furthermore, giving to the Letter Carrier Political Fund is a good investment.

How little are we asking? Enroll in the PAC program and we're asking for just five dollars per pay period — thirty-five cents per day. That's about what you make for throwing 15 letters or 7 flats. It's less than one ten minute break per pay period.

Most of us pay, on average, per day:

- \$1.80+ for life insurance
- \$2.20+ for individual car insurance
- \$4.40 (or much more) for health insurance
- \$3.50+ for homeowner's insurance

For one-tenth the cost of home owner's insurance you can ensure that you keep your home by keeping a job that pays the mortgage.

CONSIDER THIS:

- The FedEx PAC spent \$2.8 million for the 2016 election cycle.
- The UPS PAC spent \$4.8 million for the 2016 election cycle.
- Our employer, the USPS, is forbidden by law from lobbying congress.

The Letter Carrier Political Fund is the only tool we have for keeping up with the competition.

(NOTE: That total for FedEx and UPS does not count the amount given by the Teamsters Union in support of UPS.)

The Letter Carrier Political Fund is **YOUR** voice in Washington!

LAME EXCUSES

- **"I already have two allotments."**

The NALC contract now allows for a third allotment. President Young called this allotment the COLCPE allotment, now known as LCPF allotment.

- **"I already gave."**

Thank you! Your contribution helped us gain Postal Reform and FERS sick leave reimbursement, further vote-by-mail legislation and fend off contracting-out

and do-not-mail lists. But our needs do not end there.

Automatic contributions are the best way to ensure we have the resources we need to fight the battles still ahead of us. With the automatic contributions, National can have a known amount coming in to help in planning our legislative agenda.

- **"NALC only supports Democrats."**

Party affiliation does not play a role in the decision making process. NALC contributes to candidates that support NALC issues. Neil Young said it best: "Be on my side, I'll be on your side." We need support on both sides of the aisle to keep Letter Carrier issues at the forefront.

- **"LCPF isn't effective and the money isn't put to use in a way that affects me."**

In recent years, NALC has defeated risky schemes to privatize USPS, and legislative support was necessary to stop contracting out. Candidates supported by LCPF were crucial to both. Additionally, letter carriers released to Labor to Labor campaigns are paid for by LCPF, educating union members about issues and increasing NALC's clout in the labor community.

- **"But how do I know that my money isn't being sent to candidates who don't support my other issues (definition of marriage, right to bear arms, woman's right to choose)?"**

LCPF money is only directed towards NALC issues and no other issues are taken into consideration. It's about wages and benefits for Letter Carriers, period. Your jobs as Letter Carriers enable you to pursue other issues. Without your job security and benefits, you would have to be working more jobs to compensate for less \$ per hour.



Dear Brother/Sister,

The NALC has negotiated a new National Agreement that will help keep us unified and equal. We pay our union dues to ensure that we can be as well prepared as possible to attain a fair deal for Letter Carriers. We've always been successful.

This also goes for our fight with Congress. The contract oversees every day operations but Congress has the ultimate say over the longevity of the USPS.

NALC has been successful in our fight for: A strong middle class job, Leave (annual and sick), Overtime, Affordable healthcare, TSP (thrift savings plan), Workers compensation, Dependent care, and collective bargaining to name a few.

We have done this through our union's PAC — which used to be called COLCPE — the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). But the fight is not over! While the USPS negotiates the contract, Congress has the right to take collective bargaining away with ONE vote.

Currently White House and House Budget plans include:

- Raising federal employees' pension contributions by up to 6.45 percent of pay over the next six years, costing active letter carriers up to \$3,600 per year.
- Eliminating cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for current and future retirees under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The average FERS annuitant would lose:

- \$23,430 over 10 years
- \$99,471 over 20 years
- \$246,185 over 30 years

- Reducing COLAs for the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants by one-half of 1 percent (that is, 0.5 percent) each year. Resulting in the average CSRS annuitant would lose:

- \$12,598 over 10 years
- \$60,576 over 20 years
- \$169,874 over 30 years

- Eliminating Social Security supplement for FERS employees who retire before 62. If the supplement is eliminated through Legislation, here is what you would lose if you retired at age 57 with 30 years of career federal/postal service: \$1000 X 12 months = \$12,000, from ages 57-62, 5 years X \$12,000 = \$60,000

- Reducing CSRS and FERS pension benefits for new retirees by basing annuities on employees' highest average pay over five years (high-5) instead of over three years (high-3).

- Slashing the rate of interest paid on assets invested in the Thrift Savings Plan Government Securities Fund (G Fund), costing active and retired letter carriers alike \$32 billion over 10 years.

- Additionally, there are \$46 billion in vaguely defined cuts and revenue changes to the Postal Service, most likely through reducing the frequency of delivery (eliminating Saturday delivery) and scaling back door delivery.

Are you willing to sit back, and hope that Congress does the right thing, or are you willing to stand up and fight for your future? If you are ready to fight, there are some things that you may not be aware of.

For example: how do we finance our struggle? Not with dues money, but with LCPF contributions. **Not one single dollar from dues goes into Political Activity.** I hope you will find all the information you need to convince you of the importance of becoming a LCPF contributor.

Please look over the form at the bottom of the page and return it within a day or two to your Steward or a Branch Officer.

The \$5 investment per pay period demonstrates your willingness to help continue the fight to keep the benefits that our Brothers and Sisters who came before us fought so hard to earn.

Fraternally,

BRENT FJERESTAD
Legislative and Political Organizer
NALC Midwest Area

Name: _____

_____ **YES, I'M READY TO HELP NALC FIGHT FOR MY JOB!**

_____ I've already signed up online or by phone via PostalEase, or Annuity.

_____ I have questions or I would like help getting signed up. Please contact me at this primary phone number: _____

_____ I am willing to give you my Liteblue Password _____ (password will immediately be shredded after signing you up!)

_____ **NO, I CAN'T HELP NOW BECAUSE*:** _____

Branch 782



***It's important to find out what is holding you back from contributing so please share your reasons. Any other comments, feedback or input is truly welcome.**

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



“Open Season”

November 13, 2017 and ends December 11, 2017

The NALC Health Benefit 2018 “Bi-Weekly” premiums for active Carriers are posted on the following page. If you compare our coverage to that offered by others, you will realize that the NALC HBP is a better choice!

Our NALC Health Benefit Plan is a fee for service, and a “NOT FOR PROFIT” insurance Plan! ***PLEASE***, compare NALC Health Benefit Plan premiums **AND** benefits during this year’s Open Season sign up period!

Retired Letter Carrier premiums are located on the “monthly” Non-Postal Premium column on the next page. You have to be a dues/per-capita paying Retiree in order to enroll in our NALC Health Benefit Plans. NALC membership doesn’t have to stop when you retire! It should continue by continued enrollment in **OUR** union-owned Health Benefit Plan. It strengthens our Association. *And, it is better for retired Letter Carriers, too!*

If you have any questions at all, please contact me at this phone number: (661) 398-6075.

MARK RAMIREZ
NALC Branch 782 NALC Health Benefit Representative

Once you have decided to enroll, access *PostalEASE* via the web at [HTTPS://LITEBLUE.USPS.GOV](https://LITEBLUE.USPS.GOV), or an Employee Self-Service Kiosk (available at some facilities), or by calling the Employee Service Line at 1-877-477-3273, option 1; TTY 866-260-7507. **We strongly recommend that if you are enrolling in Self Plus One or Self and Family that you use the web version of PostalEASE and not use the phone. Use your USPS Employee ID number (EIN) found at the top of your earnings statement and USPS Self-Service password to access LiteBlue and PostalEASE via the web. Use your USPS EIN and current 4-digit USPS PIN to conduct self-service telephone transactions on the telephone using IVR. If you don’t know your USPS Self-Service Password, you can reset your USPS Self-Service Password (and USPS PIN) using the Self-Service Profile 9SSP Application at WWW.SSP.USPS.GOV or via links provided on the LiteBlue and Blue logon pages.**

The quickest way for your election to be processed is for you to use *PostalEASE*. However, if you are unable to use *PostalEASE*, you may also complete the *PostalEASE* Worksheet (available at *LiteBlue*) and mail it to the **HR Shared Service Center at: HRSCC, Compensation/Benefits, P.O. Box 970400, Greensboro, North Carolina 27497-0400.**

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT [LiteBlue](#)

Plan information for the USPS Health Benefits Plan is available at [LiteBlue at HTTPS://LITEBLUE/USPS.GOV/USPSHBP](https://LITEBLUE.USPS.GOV/USPSHBP). Before you decide to enroll, read the *Summary of Benefits and Coverage* which provides a helpful overview of what the USPS Health Benefits Plan covers and your share of health care costs.

Per Pay Period Premium Contributions for USPSHB Plan

First CCA Appointment

	Total Premium	What USPS Pays	What YOU Pay
Self Only	\$165.00	\$125.00	\$40.00
Self Plus One	\$330.00	\$214.50	\$115.50
Self and Family	\$495.00	\$321.75	\$173.25

All Subsequent CCA Appointments*

	Total Premium	What USPS Pays	What YOU Pay
Self Only	\$165.00	\$125.00	\$40.00
Self Plus One	\$330.00	\$247.50	\$82.50
Self and Family	\$495.00	\$371.25	\$123.75

*After initial appointment of a 360-day term and upon reappointment to another 360-day term

Questions relating to your benefits?

Please contact the HRSSC at 1-877-477-3273, option 5; TTY 1-866-260-7507.

Type of Enrollment	Enrollment Code	Non-Postal Premium				Postal Premium	
		Bi-Weekly		Monthly		Bi-Weekly	
		Gov't Share	Your Share	Gov't Share	Your Share	Category 1 Your Share	Category 2* Your Share
High Option Self Only	321	\$229.25	\$78.79	\$496.71	\$170.71	\$72.42	\$66.06
High Option Self Plus One	323	\$491.00	\$187.06	\$1,063.83	\$405.30	\$173.42	\$159.78
High Option Self and Family	322	\$518.78	\$172.93	\$1,124.03	\$374.68	\$157.36	\$143.53
CDHB Self Only	324	\$160.70	\$53.56	\$348.17	\$116.06	\$48.74	\$44.46
CDHB Self Plus One	326	\$347.62	\$115.87	\$753.17	\$251.06	\$105.44	\$96.17
CDHP Self and Family	325	\$353.37	\$118.45	\$769.96	\$256.65	\$107.79	\$98.32
Value Option Self Only	KM1	\$131.89	\$43.96	\$285.76	\$95.25	\$40.01	\$36.49
Value Option Self Plus One	KM3	\$285.28	\$95.09	\$618.11	\$206.03	\$86.53	\$78.93
Value Option Self and Family	KM2	\$291.77	\$97.26	\$632.18	\$210.72	\$88.50	\$80.72

* Category 2 denotes the premiums for active duty Letter Carriers

Since 1950, the NALC Health Benefit Plan (HBP) has provided Letter Carriers and their families with first-rate health insurance. The NALC's health plan is a natural choice because — as the only health plan owned and operated by Letter Carriers — it pays particular attention to **OUR** needs. And because NALC HBP is a not-for-profit organization, its **only** focus is the health of its members **NOT** on making profits for shareholders.

The Plan's mission is to provide our members accessibility to quality medical care while maintaining a comprehensive benefit package. We pride ourselves in offering excellent benefits with affordable premiums for our Health Benefit Plan members.





Health Prescription: Insights shared by Mark Ramirez

WEATHER AND CLIMATE..... WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

When the same scientists at NOAA attest that climate change is real, oil companies, some in Congress, and average citizens don't believe them? Scientific information is looked at as suspect!

Well, science is **NOT** politics!!! Climate change deniers need to wake up!

**CLIMATE CHANGE
MAKES STORMS MORE
SEVERE!!!**

If the climate scientists are correct and their scientific research is accurate, **THE WORST IS YET TO COME!!!!**

Most US Congress members are not scientists, and they deny climate change.

**WHICH CORPORATIONS PROVIDE
LARGE DONATIONS TO THEIR
CAMPAIGNS?**

MARK "Post-Mark" RAMIREZ
NALC HBP Rep. Retired Carrier
The Golden Empire Branch 782

WEATHER is the state of the atmosphere at any given time on our planet. Most weather affects people, agriculture, and ecosystems and takes place in the lower layers of the atmosphere.

Familiar aspects of weather include temperature, precipitation, clouds and the wind, that people experience through the course of a day.

Severe weather conditions include hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards and drought.

CLIMATE is the long-term average of the weather in a given place.

While the weather can change in minutes or hours, a change in climate is something that develops over longer periods of

decades to centuries. Climate is defined not only by average temperatures and precipitation but also by the type, frequency, duration and intensity of weather events (heat waves, storms, floods and droughts).

It may be helpful to think about the difference between **WEATHER** and **CLIMATE** with an analogy: Weather influences what clothes you wear on a given day, while the climate where you live, influences the entire wardrobe you buy.

NOAA (National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration) warned people that when Hurricane Harvey made land, rain and flooding was going to be monumental. **AND?** People prepared for this disaster!

NOAA has more warnings.

“Open Season”

November 13, 2017 and ends December 11, 2017



If you are a CCA, I want to be sure you understand the new benefits and the process for taking necessary action so you can make the best decision for you and your family. **Please read the following information carefully.** Under the previous collective-bargaining agreement, CCAs received a \$125 contribution per pay period from USPS, regardless of whether you chose “self only,” “self plus one” or “self and family” coverage in the USPS Non-Career Health Benefits Plan. Under the new agreement, CCAs who choose “self plus one” or “self and family” coverage will receive a contribution equal to 65 percent of the total premium during your first year of employment as a CCA and 75 percent of the total premium after the first year of employment as a CCA.

Fredric V. Rolando, NALC President

2017 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
 Prescription Drug Program 1-800-933-6252
 CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy 1-800-237-2767
 Durable Medical Equipment 1-855-511-1893
"24/7 Nurse Hotline" 1-877-220-6252
 CVS/CareMark Pharmacist 1-888-636-6252
 Solutions for Caregivers (24/7) 1-877-468-1016
 CIGNA PPO Locator Line 1-877-220-6252
 CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval 1-800-668-9682
 Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation) 1-866-784-8454
 CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts) 1-800-558-9443
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount) 1-877-521-0244
 Disease Management Program 1-800-227-3728
 OPM Retirement Info Center 1-888-767-6738
 Federal Information Center 1-800-333-4636
 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 Bakersfield (661) 631-9258
 Shared Services Option 5 live person 1-877-477-3273

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

"Out tHeRe"



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

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

Preferred Provider (PPO)
 Cost: \$20.00 Co-pay per office visit
PPO Deductible: Per Calendar Year
 \$300 "Individual"
 \$600 "Self & Family" or "Self Plus One"

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

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

MARK RAMIREZ
 NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative
(661) 398-6075

100 EXTENSIVE TO LIST ALL.

I Got Your Back!



By Susan Lewis, NALC Branch 3
Executive Vice-President

I feel as though I might have told this story before but, at my age, you have five or six good stories under your belt and people expect you to trot them out on occasion.

When my three, bright, reliable, responsible, very mature children were old enough to be left alone for an hour or so after school, they were allowed to have friends over before I got home from work. They'd eat every snack in the house, play video games, watch tv, or make silly videos on our 'state of the art' VHS camcorder. They were model children, never any trouble. *Whether or not you are a parent of a teenager, you were once teenager yourself and you probably see where this story is going...*

One afternoon I came home to discover a large slice in the arm of the living room chair. Interestingly enough, all five kid-witnesses agreed that the dagger my parents gave one of my boys as a souvenir was responsible for the stab wound to my furniture but when asked, collectively and separately, not one of them saw who did it. Five people in a tiny house but no one saw a thing!

It's been more than fifteen years since that incident and I still don't know the responsible party. No one ever got in trouble for it. The chair was fixed, and since replaced. Through a hundred arguments and disagreement among them all since that day, none of the now-adult players in this play ever came forward to confess or tattle, even after plying them with alcohol. And, for reasons all my own, I never want to know. I'm very proud of all of them. They understood unionism.

My Letter Carrier husband and I, and my parents before me, were always proud of the fact that we belonged to unions. And, to us, "union" meant that together we could accomplish goals that were outside our reach as individuals. We never specifically taught our children that but they must have gotten the message over dinner table talk because they worked that theory for all it was worth and it paid dividends.

Management is very aware that they can't get away with much in offices where Carriers stick together; there's no possibility of one Carrier throwing another under the bus for anything. But, in an office divided, they are able to trample over anyone. I am incredibly proud when I hear from a CCA in one office who is sticking up for a CCA in another; they understand the concept, even if they haven't yet put the union name to their actions. I know the old-timers like me get it. I was lucky enough to work in more than one office where I knew my Brothers and Sisters had my

back. That means, we are well on our way to achieving our goal of solidarity.

What we need now is to blur the line between CCAs, former CCAs, and seasoned Carriers. I hear from both sides: full time Regulars complain that newly hired Carriers don't care about service to our customers. CCAs complain that they have to pick up the slack from veteran Carriers. I get it. But, the bottom line is, we're on the same side. We want the same things. We can find common ground, and when we do, we will all be better for it.

CCAs and former CCAs are resentful that they are doing the same job as long time Carriers but earning much less. Full time carriers see CCAs as wet-behind-the-ears beginners and too eager to kowtow to management. CCAs tend to be more skittish about bucking management because they are fearful of the consequences. Instead of pulling us apart, these are the very things that should be drawing us together. I'm a firm believer that we can all learn from one another's circumstances.

My unsolicited advice for junior employees: The old timers didn't get where they are without similar struggles. We were all brand new at some point and we all felt then what you are feeling now. We felt anxious, we felt under-trained and overworked, disposable, and we all felt we were always getting the short end of the stick. I learned early on that doing a good job and sticking up for yourself to 'the old guys' went a long way in earning their respect and their loyalty. Listen to them. Early on, you may not believe that experience brings wisdom but it's true and you can learn a lot if you're paying attention.

For those of you with a few years in, continue to share your wisdom even if you think it's falling on deaf ears. My kids story is a perfect example of leading by example. Continue to give the excellent service you do. Be proud of it. Brag about it. Your customers appreciate you and management knows they cannot push you to compromise the trusting relationships you've built with them. Explain to you junior Brothers and Sisters about 3996s and the protection they offer. Remind them about special inspections when appropriate. Let them know that the same Contract that protects you from discipline, protects them. Be their voice when management is pushing them to their breaking point. A knock-it-off message to a supervisor from a knowledgeable Carrier is often enough to make them. Be someone's hero! And, listen to them. Try to remember your early days when you were less than sure of yourself but too proud to ask for help. Your job isn't easy but neither is theirs; and, I'm absolutely certain that none of us would wish to go back and start all over.

My kids still squabble among themselves occasionally, even as adults but each of them knows to their core that if someone tried to hurt one of them, the others would defend them, without question. Wouldn't it be nice if all our NALC Brothers and Sisters had our backs?

Article courtesy of the Buffalo, NY Branch 3 November 2016 BUZZ

Our Veterans understand the concept!!

All NALC members owe an even greater debt to Letter Carriers who were Civil War military veterans that they may not even be aware of...

1889-1901 The NALC Is Born

Letter Carriers had tried to organize a national union at least three times—in 1870 in Washington, DC, in 1877 in New York City, and in 1880 again in New York City.

Recognizing that these earlier attempts had failed in part due to the expense of regularly convening enough Carriers to sustain a national organization, in 1889 the Milwaukee Letter Carriers Association decided to time their call for another national meeting of Carriers to coincide with the annual reunion of the Grand Army of the Republic — **AN ORGANIZATION OF UNION ARMY VETERANS** — so that Letter Carriers who were veterans could take advantage of reduced train fares.

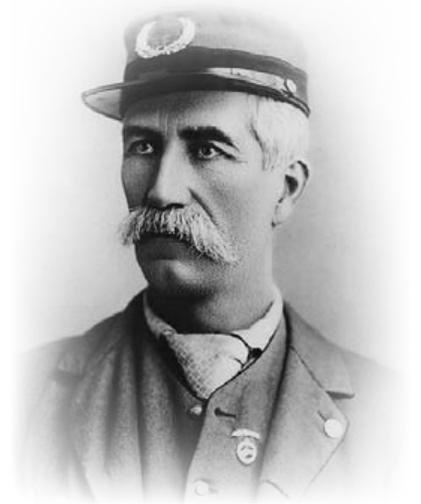
In issuing the invitation sent to every city delivery post office in the United States, the Milwaukee Carriers advised delegates without regulation postal uniforms “to bring a letter of introduction from the postmaster or superintendent” and to bring “credentials from superior officers.”

The Milwaukee Carriers also set forth a partial agenda for the meeting: “**1. The formation of a national organization; 2. Petitioning Congress for an increase of Carriers’ salary; 3. Organizing a U.S. Letter Carriers’ Mutual Insurance Company; 4. The pensioning of Carriers after continued service of [number to be debated] years; 5. Providing substitute Carriers with a fixed salary during their period of probation.**”

Ironically, the 60 Carriers who answered Milwaukee’s convention call — 48 accredited delegates and at least 12 other participants — were not from the large cities such as Philadelphia and New York that had worked so hard for the passage of the eight-hour law, but primarily from small and middle-sized cities.

So when August Dahlman of Milwaukee called the convention to order on Thursday, August 29, 1889 in the meeting hall above Schaefer’s Saloon at 244 West Water Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, delegates elected John J. Goodwin of Providence, Rhode Island, as temporary chairman, perhaps in an effort to balance regional concerns.

Delegates moved quickly, unanimously adopting a resolution to form a **National Association of Letter Carriers** and then, on the next day, elected William Wood of Detroit as the first president and appointed an Executive Board to coordinate all legislative efforts.



William Wood, Detroit Branch 1
First NALC National President

Source: *Carriers in a Common Cause — A History of Letter Carriers and the NALC*



Bakersfield National Cemetery

**THIS VETERANS' DAY
NOVEMBER 11, 2017
WE HONORED ALL WHO
SERVED OUR COUNTRY**

We especially honored those military Veterans and NALC members who are still delivering mail in each of the cities that we serve!!!

93203 — ARVIN
No Veterans currently assigned

93204 — AVENAL
No Veterans currently assigned

93215 — DELANO
Arnie Reyes-Rios: USA — 2000 - 2006

93241 — LAMONT
No Veterans currently assigned

93250 — McFARLAND
Robert Campos: USA — 1988 - 1991
Fernando Soto: USMC — 1989 - 1995

93263 — SHAFTER
No Veterans currently assigned

93268 — TAFT
No Veterans currently assigned

93280 — WASCO
No Veterans currently assigned

93301 — DOWNTOWN STATION
Eugene Shebley: USN — 1987 - 1995
Lynn Hunter: USAF — 1977 - 1978
Artie Evans: USMC — 1990 - 1994

93304 — SOUTH STATION
Mark Andersen: USAF — 2009 - 2013
Neil Kramer: USA&R — 1985 - 1997

93305 — EAST BAKERSFIELD
Cherilyn Morgan: USN — 1983 - 2000
Steve Lubrecht: USAF — 1984 - 1985
& National Guard: 1986 - 1989
George Duarte: USA — 1982 - 1985
& USAR — 1991 - 1992
Robert Guerrero: USAF — 1992 - 1996
Levi Prinz : USA — 2012 - 2015

93306 — HILLCREST
Joe Gutierrez: USA — 1972 - 1974
David Renner: USA — 1990 - 1996
Eric Zuniga: USA — 2013 - 2016
Vince Gonzalez: USMC — 1986 - 1990
Otto Hernandez: USAF — 21 YEARS

93307 — BRUNDAGE
No Veterans currently assigned

93308 — DOLE COURT
Robert Zehner: USA — 1990 - 2004
Ricardo Obando: USA — 1983 - 2004
Steven Carter: USA — 1988 - 1991
Paul Hernandez: USA — 1990 - 1994
Art Mooney: USN — 1974 - 1979
Daniel Medina: USN — 1983 - 1989
Lee Collaso: USN — XXXX - XXXX
Michael Tucker: XXX — 1998 - 2010
Henry Gasco: USCG — 24+ YEARS

93309 — STOCKDALE
Bobby Cruz: USA — 1972 - 1974
Cindy Flores: USN — 1979 - 1983
John Hardin: USN — 1976 - 1980
Paul Skinner: USN — 1982 - 1986
Joe Lovoie: USA — 1971 - 1972
Randy Courson: USAF — 1972 - 1976

93311/13 — CAMINO MEDIA
David Bridges: USMC — 1979 - 1983
Duane Huse: USAF — 5 YRS 10 months
Mike Meza: USA — 1993 - 1996

93501 — MOJAVE
No Veterans currently assigned

93504 — CALIFORNIA CITY
Ray Pasillas: USA — 1983 - 1987
One Veteran declined participation

93516 — BORON
No Veterans currently assigned

93523 — EDWARDS AFB
No Veterans currently assigned

93555 — RIDGECREST
Tina Dill: USA — 1991 - 1993
Nicholas Travers: USAF — 2007 - 2013
Gary Burgwald: USAF — 1973 - 1981

93561 — TEHACHAPI
No Veterans currently assigned

93562 — TRONA
No Veterans currently assigned

*We also thank all
Postal employee
Veterans who are not
NALC members!*



The Defense Department has announced that honorably discharged Veterans will be able to shop online at military exchanges effective this Veterans Day, November 11, 2017. "As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members. Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say, 'Thank You' to those who served with honor."

Long before Bakersfield Letter Carrier Joe Jones retired in 2004 with fifty years of federal service, he had been a soldier in the United States Army. He was honored on October 11, 2017 when he went to Washington, DC on a very special personal journey.



“I don’t know who nominated me, but I was so honored to be able to be a part of the inaugural Oklahoma Warrior’s Honor Flight!”

IT WAS A WHIRLWIND TRIP! And, it all started with festivities on October 10 at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa where there were high school students who performed a skit about bootcamp and there were speeches by a number of politicians.

“We were put up in a hotel that night and the 77 of us all had to wake up to board our buses at 0330. There were WWII Vets, Korean War Vets and Vietnam War Vets. We even had one guy who was 100 years old! Those of us who could walk were assigned two Vets to one ‘Guardian’ and the Vets in wheelchairs each had their own.

What happened next was amazing! We had a police escort all the way to the interstate to travel to the airport! We ran every single red light on the way! And then, the state police blocked each on-ramp so that nobody could get on and slow us down as we went on our way.

At the airport, we were put in a special line where we didn’t have to do all of the normal security procedures as we got ready to board the United Airlines charter flight for our two hour and 30 minute flight to Washington, DC.

We got into Ronald Reagan National Airport around 0800 and we immediately went to Arlington National Cemetery. Seeing the rows and rows of headstones was a somber sight. We were told that there 435,000 people are currently buried there and that, because space is getting scarce, the only individuals eligible for burial will be those who are killed during combat.



There we went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and we were able to watch the changing of the guard and to see groups of school kids presenting wreaths to honor all of our deceased

Veterans. President Truman’s message carved into the stone at that memorial expressed a heart-felt acknowledgement.



I was also able to have a picture taken of me at the tomb of Audie Murphy who won the Congressional Medal of Honor and was the most decorated American Army soldier of World War II. Another highlight was that I got to see where John Glenn is buried.

We then travelled to the front of the Capitol Building and saw many of the buildings around The Mall before we drove around the Pentagon where the site where the plane hit on 9/11 was pointed out to us.

Next, we went to where the WWII, Korean, Vietnam, Navy and Air Force memorials were located. We were unable to see the USMC memorial because there was work going on there.



I was most impressed with the Vietnam Memorial. There I was able to get an etching of a name on ‘The Wall’ of a guy I knew — John McLemore. He had graduated from Foothill High School in 1965 before he went to Vietnam.



Congressman Markwayne Mullins is the person I was least impressed with that I was around during the time I was in Washington. [He is the person who, at a town meeting, exclaimed that taxpayers don’t pay his salary.] He saw that I was

from Pryor, OK on my name tag and that I was in his District. When I started to question him about what he was going to do to protect the benefits of Federal employees, he told me he didn’t have the time to talk to me because he had to get back for a vote.”

Markwayne Mullins is a strong supporter of Donald Trump. “He didn’t like me asking about his support for us.

We were only in DC about ten hours. We had a bag lunch on the bus but we didn’t mind. It reminded all of us of what it had been like when we’d been younger...

Exhausted, we finally left Washington and returned to Tulsa where we arrived at around 9:30 — over twelve hours after we’d left.

Four amazing things happened next.

On the plane, we heard, “Mail Call!” Each of us were presented with a packet of letters. Mine had 25. Most were from school children who were thanking me for my service. One was from a former manager at Lowe’s where I worked after I retired from the USPS. What a surprise!! It made me feel like I was appreciated!

When we arrived in Tulsa, we were asked if we would mind waiting to deplane. We were told that a recent double amputee Army Veteran who had come there to receive prosthetic legs had arrived aboard a plane which had landed right before us. He had lost his legs during combat in Afghanistan. People in the terminal wanted to honor him.

We weren’t there to see it, but we were told that the Veteran was so emotional when this happened. He hadn’t expected any kind of “Welcome Home!”

Many of the folks on the Honor Flight were Vietnam Veterans. This whole thing made many of them feel appreciated in a way that most had not experienced when they first came home from their war.

Third: When we exited, we were greeted by almost 750 cheering people who were lined up at the exit! We didn’t expect this either!

Finally, when we returned to our vehicles which had been parked at the hotel, there were twelve Tulsa policemen there who were lined up and saluted us while telling us,

“Thank You for Your Service!”

Continued on next page...

I told each of them, "Thank you for **YOUR** service!!"

All I know is that being on the Honor Flight made me feel like a King!

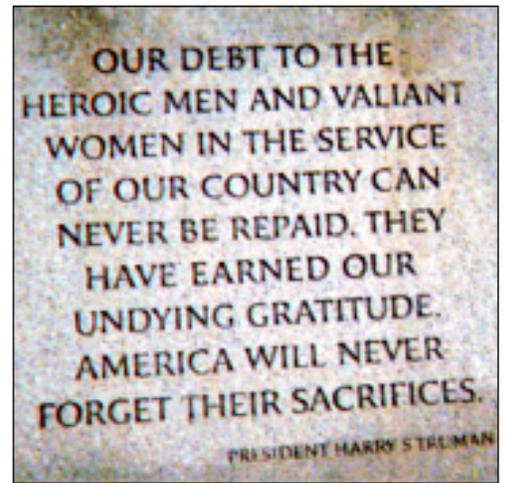
Exhausted, we finally left Washington and returned to Tulsa where we arrived at around 21:30 — at the end of our fifteen hour day.

We were told that each Honor Flight costs approximately \$110,000. Part of this is the flight cost. Also, we were each presented with a red polo shirt and the Guardians were given blue ones. We were also presented with a special two-sided medal.

I would encourage anyone who hears about any kind of a fund raiser for the Honor Flight to please be generous."

The excitement that Joe Jones shares about this honor is infectious! He encourages anyone who is either an eligible Veteran or someone who wishes to be a Guardian to contact the Honor Flight folks!

There is also a certain sense of urgency in this project as many of our Veterans are older...



Joe Jones, USA Veteran NALC Branch 782 Retiree

Joe had been a Letter Carrier in Itasca, Illinois since October 1956. He worked in a small town. There were two city routes and he was the Regular on one of them. Both routes were walk-outs.

In fact, the town was so small that the town relied on volunteer firemen — and Joe did that, too! "When we had to go fight a fire, I just flagged down a person driving by (everybody knew that I was one of the three volunteer firemen) and I would leave the mail in a spot box. The Post Office had an agreement that, if there was a fire, we would go do what we had to do and then we would return to deliver the mail. We also knew that there would be no overtime and that we would stay out until all the mail was delivered."

In late August 1957 he received a letter that directed him to report for a physical to determine his military classification. He told the Postmaster that he needed to take the day off and that he would be back as soon as he could.

Well, Joe came back two years later...

After he was classified 1-A, he raised his right hand, and was told, "You're in the Army, now." He then found himself on a train called the "California Zephyr" on his way to Ft. Carson in Colorado Springs, CO for eight weeks of recruit training.

After graduating, he was sent to Fort Chaffee in Arkansas for another 8 weeks of training to become an Army Clerk-Typist. (Although he notes that Elvis Presley was there at the same time going through Gunnery School, "Elvis and I never really hung out with each other.")

While on leave back in Itasca, Joe was told that they could sure use his help to deliver all of the Christmas mail. As an E-1, he was only making \$78 a month and decided that he might as well make some extra money at his old Letter Carrier job. For the next two weeks, he did 10 hours a day and worked 120 hours.



An official boot camp graduate!



Joe, with his Aunt, on leave in Itasca.

At the end of the time Joe went into the postmaster's office for his pay and he was told that he couldn't receive two paychecks from the Federal government at the same time...

However, Joe didn't have much time to dwell on such an unfair situation.

He was off to his new assignment with the 26th Transportation Battalion at Ft. Ord in California. If it wasn't summertime, he was doing administrative duties or driving trucks hauling fuel or water.

During the summertime, when the Reservists were reporting for training, he drove a bus from Ft. Ord to Camp Roberts near San Luis Obispo every day and then he would transport any individuals returning to Ft. Ord. It wasn't bad duty.

Joe does have one particular event that happened to him during "Operation Rocky Shoals". The 26th was involved in fuel transport to USA, USMC and USAF personnel who were undergoing maneuvers at Ft. Hunter-Liggett (close to Hearst Castle). It was potentially a hazardous job because they were pulling 5000 gallons of fuel on each truck. They needed to be extra alert at all times. Although drivers were to be at the wheel no more than twelve hours at a time, Joe had been continuously "on the job" for a little less than 36 hours when he passed out. A helicopter MEDEVAC back to Ft. Ord was the start of a two week stay in sick bay recovering from mononucleosis.

During January - May 1958, the 26th was deployed to duty in Nevada. He remembers the long convoys which would travel along the old Hwy.

466 (which is pretty much the Hwy. 58 route) to Barstow and make a turn to the north a little before Las Vegas to arrive at Camp Desert Rock.



[Desert Rock was a "...series of exercises conducted by the US military in conjunction with atmospheric nuclear tests. They were carried out at the Nevada Proving Grounds between 1951 and 1958. Their purpose was to train troops and gain knowledge of military maneuvers and operations on the nuclear battlefield. They included observer programs, tactical maneuvers, and damage effects tests..." Source: Wikipedia]

Much of Joe's duties entailed driving a bus, filled with Officers, to Las Vegas for R&R. Again, it wasn't bad duty at all. Looking back now, he does remember that — occasionally — some of the buildings would shake. Testing was going on at Desert Rock...

In 1959, Joe's enlistment ended and he returned to Illinois to pick up his life where he'd left it. The postmaster told him that he no longer had a job. Joe pointed out that he'd been drafted and that he had Rights. Joe then went to the Veterans Administration and they successfully explained to the postmaster the legal reasons that Joe *was* going to return to his job as a Letter Carrier.

After being there about a week, the postmaster told Joe, "I'm going to have to let you go because you're just not fast enough." Joe told the postmaster that he was faster and better than the postmaster's two 60 year old uncles that he'd hired. Another trip to the VA. They agreed with Joe. He was soon back at work.

Four years after being discharged should have been long enough that there would be no further military adventures for Joe. But, in 1963, he received another letter informing him that he was to report to Ft. McCoy in Monroe County, Wisconsin.

There, with a group of other former soldiers, Joe found that the Army planned to reactivate them. They had decided that it would be cheaper to bring them up to speed than to train new recruits.

A Wisconsin "retread" decided that something wasn't right and he contacted his Congressman. The next day, the Congressman showed up, asked some questions of the fort commanders and then posed a question to Joe and the others, "Who wants to go home?" When no one wanted to stay, they were discharged from their military obligation one final time.

Oh...the ultimate planned destination for Joe and the others in 1963 was to have been Vietnam. (To this day, Joe thinks about that once in a while...)

Whether or not he felt that he needed to leave the area just in case the Army tried anything else, Joe left Illinois later in 1963. He'd also decided that he'd had enough of delivering the mail in temperatures which could dip as low as twenty-six degrees below zero. He got a transfer to Bakersfield where — almost 41 years later — he retired as a Letter Carrier on January 3, 2004.

Rick Gerdes, USCG Veteran NALC Branch 782 Retiree

Although his father had been in the Air Force, Rick (who was living in Bakersfield) felt pulled toward a different path. In January 1973, he found himself in boot camp at USCG TRACEN ALAMEDA for eight weeks as a member of Company Foxtrot 89 with Drill Instructor BM1 Keith.

Eight weeks later, offered a chance to be stationed in Alaska, Rick thought it would be a great choice. He had always wanted to travel there. His new unit was Cape Sarichef, a Long Range Aid to Navigation (LORAN) Station. His tour of duty was going to be one year on Unimak Island.

Unimak is the first island in the Aleutian chain and is about 700 miles south of Kodiak and about 50 miles away from Cold Bay, AK. Because it was so remote, it was considered "isolated duty" — there was no town, there was no mall, if you were married there were no accommodations for a wife, and if single there were no women anywhere anyway.

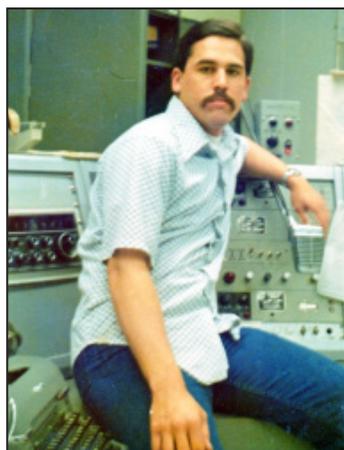
However, in many ways, Unimak was an amazing place to be because Rick liked fishing and hunting. The Station was in the middle of a wildlife preserve and they were constantly seeing Parkat Squirrels, wolverines, Alaskan brown bear, golden eagles, bald eagles, ptarmigan, fox, walrus and seals. The black sand beaches and the many caves were meant for exploring. There were two volcanoes (Mount Shishaldin and Pogromni Volcano) on an island which was about 70 miles long and 50 miles wide.



Hiking was a main pastime. Often, the crew would drive to remote areas in their Mercedes-Benz "Unimog". It had gigantic tires and could go over anything until it would need a new differential. Rick was there when one Coast Guardsman was run over by the Unimog. Their Corpsman, who'd honed his skills in Vietnam, was able to keep him alive until he was airlifted for care. Rick heard that he ultimately survived.



The Unimog wasn't stuck for long!



Rick, at midnight, without a flash.



Sybil and Rick at Sennet Lake — halfway to "Scotch Lighthouse"!

The base, a couple of acres on the northwest side of the island, was home to a crew of about twenty with a LTJG (O-2) as the commanding officer.

"The Cool Barge" would arrive annually with staples (flour, potatoes, toilet paper, etc.). They were supposed to last a year. Thankfully, once a week, the



Continued on next page...



Rick bags a caribou.

Coasties received a shipment of fresh milk, vegetables and fruit by way of Reeves Aleutian Airways. Plentiful caribou supplied some much appreciated fresh protein for the crew. And, occasionally, a Coast Guard C-130

would land on the airstrip with needed parts and supplies.

At the end of his assignment in 1974, Rick attempted to be stationed at another LORSTA in Bangkok, Thailand; however, back-to-back overseas tours of duty were not allowed. In looking over units to which he might go, he noticed that there was a 95 footer out of Morro Bay. Close to home? He decided to go to sea!

The USCGC CAPE HEDGE (95311) literally became Rick's "home away from home". After he walked down the dock with his seabag and reported for duty, he lived aboard ship for about 7 months. His "rack" was in the forward part of the boat. (Picture a three-level bunk bed which, because of the location right by the hull, was more curved than straight. He also described what he called "A Pump Toilet". It wasn't exactly the Ritz!) . Eventually, he and a fellow crewman rented a small house in town.

His boat stayed pretty busy. The duty crew were always being called out on Search and Rescue (SAR) missions. They went out every day one month, and Rick calculated that he had probably gone out over 200 times in the year and-a-half he was stationed there and that the vast majority of times were because someone had run out of gas. On some of their SAR patrols, they would be out for three or four days as far out as 200 miles. This was aboard a boat only 95 feet long — and with a draft of about 5 feet, it was usually a pretty rough ride and he was sometimes seasick! He did share two distinct memories.

"We got a call that there was a fishing boat, nets out, with no one aboard except a dog and that it was headed across the Santa



A "Brownie" and seal lunch.

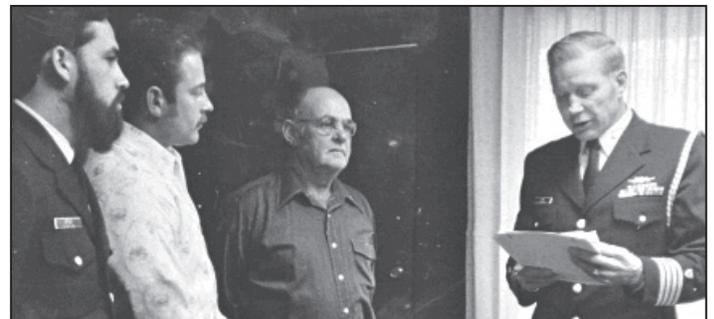


Barbara Channel. It was a navigation hazard. When we pulled alongside, we sent over a BMI and two Seamen and they confirmed that the vessel was unmanned. However, they discovered weapons and drugs. We radioed in what we'd found, took her in tow and headed to Avila Beach. An FBI agent was waiting for us. It was the first time I'd ever seen an FBI agent! We heard later that forensics established that there had been a gunfight and that at least two people had probably fallen off the boat which had been underway since leaving her homeport in San Francisco!

Another time, we received a distress call because a man had fallen off his boat into the surf. The 95 footer was on a call and all we had left was an 18 foot Boston Whaler. There were only two of us, a GM3 who was the acting Officer of the Deck and me. We only had on light-weight life jackets we'd been working in. There was a good 20 foot sea running. The entrance was always a little hazardous because of the way that the dredged sand created a shoal with cross bearing seas. But, the motto of the Coast Guard is that 'You have to go out, but you don't have to come back!'

We had no problem getting out into the surf to look for him, but our engine died and we couldn't stay turned into the sea. We caught a big wave broadside, flipped and capsized. I think that I hit my head on something because I remember feeling dazed; but, I woke right up when we hit the cold water. I'm glad a fishing boat was close by to help us out!"

The two civilians fishermen were eventually honored by the USCG for their quick action in taking Rick and the other Coast Guardsman aboard after the Boston Whaler had capsized.



Rick Gerdes (left) in a ceremony honoring two civilians for their help.

After his tour on the HEDGE, Rick then went on to finish his four year enlistment in a Coast Guard recruiting office in Fresno.

From 1982 until his active Letter Carrier career ended thirty-four years later, Rick is glad that he was been able to survive!



This is one picture taken of a series of murals on two different walls of two buildings at the corner of 20th and Eye Street in Bakersfield, California.



November 11 was Veterans Day

You didn't have to carry that satchel, deal with your supervisor, or even hope that you didn't get bitten by a dog that day. You probably thought *THAT* was a pretty cool thing...

But, unless you served in the Military or have a member of your family who did, the day may not have really meant very much to you at all.

THAT'S REALLY SAD...

Whether you took the time to realize it or not, you have a reason to be thankful to *EACH* and *EVERY* person who ever wore the uniform!

THE WALL

It was a Saturday and the *Reader's Digest* had come in the mail. As I thumbed through it I saw a story called "The Wall That Heals". I stop, but then quickly passed it. It's been many years since I came back from Vietnam and I don't watch movies or read stories about "the Nam". It was in the past, it needed to stay there.

A few months later I pick up that *Digest* and open it to the story, for some reason it would not leave my mind. It kept pulling me back. I read the first paragraph and the tears start to flood from my eyes. I put the story down and never went back to finish it, but I knew that someday I had to go to "the Wall".

In 1987 we went to my wife Jeanne's high school reunion in Pennsylvania, I also planned a side trip to Washington DC. I told Jeanne and my youngest daughter, Diane, that I wanted to see the Monuments and Museums. But? I admit now that the the real reason was "the Wall".

In Washington we spent the first day walking through museums and art galleries, anything to avoid "the Wall".

The "Wall." I wanted to see it, I had to see it, but I was also afraid to see it.

On the second day we went to the Washington monument, but — because the crowd was too large — we walked to the Lincoln monument instead. Jeanne asked me where the Vietnam Memorial was; I tell her that it's off to the right and she said, "Let's go there."

No, not yet. For some reason I can't. I don't know why, I just can't do it. She knows something is wrong, I am distant. Here. But, not here. We look at the Lincoln monument but I don't really see it. My mind is on "the Wall"; it's pulling me. It's time.

Finally. It's time.

As we walk towards "the Wall" I fall silent, I become more distant, my heart is pounding, I find it hard to breathe. The "Wall" pulls me towards it.

We enter from the left. The first thing I see are the statues, I have no emotion to them. They almost look out of place,then I saw "the Wall".

Black granite half buried in the ground. Half buried like the war and the people that came back, half hidden like the conscience of the country. The tears flowed, I couldn't stop them, I didn't want to stop them. I can't see through the tears so I close my eyes and I am back on the flight deck, back in Vietnam. I can see it, smell it, touch it and hear it. I quickly open my eyes.....and I see "the Wall".

So many names, so many names. They were all young once as I had been, had so many dreams, had so many hopes. I close my eyes and let Vietnam flow over me. I stood there and sobbed. I cry for the ones that I had known, and for the ones that I did not know. We were all Brothers. We went to a land that hated us and came home to a land that hated us.

It wasn't supposed to be like that.

**Michael L. Murphy
Attack Squadron 153,
Ordnance
USS CORAL SEA
Vietnam 1967, 68, 69**

Editor-guy note: This is from a collection of accounts of Vietnam Era Veterans who shared insights on their military and post-military experiences.

THANK YOU BRANCH 782 VETERANS!!!



With all due respect: A Heartfelt "Thank You for Your Service!" to Each and Every Military Veteran!!!

H OUSTON LETTER CARRIER

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November 2016

6 THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL



First unveiled on November 13, 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial remains an atypical war monument. Its main feature, a V-shaped wall inscribed with the names of over 58,000 U.S. soldiers killed during the Vietnam War, lacks heroic or patriotic symbols, and its polished black granite façade contrasts with the white marble statues and structures surrounding it on the National Mall. Nonetheless, it has become one of the most popular tourist attractions in Washington, D.C., with over 4.2 million estimated visitors so far in 2012 alone. Check out six facts about this iconic testament to sacrifice and loss.

1. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was built without government funds.

Jan C. Scruggs, a wounded Vietnam War vet, studied what is now called post-traumatic stress disorder upon his return to the United States. Within a few years, he began calling for a memorial to help with the healing process for the roughly 3 million Americans who served in the conflict. After watching the movie "The Deer Hunter," Scruggs apparently stepped up his activism even further, using \$2,800 of his own money to form the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in 1979. Many politicians expressed their support, and the U.S. Congress passed legislation reserving three acres in the northwest corner of the National Mall for a future monument. All donations, however, came from the private sector. Bob Hope and other celebrities' lended a hand with fundraising, and by 1981 some 275,000 Americans, along with corporations, foundations, veterans groups, civic organizations and labor unions, had given \$8.4 million to the project.

2. A college student won the memorial's design contest.

Having raised the necessary cash, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund next held a design contest. The guidelines stipulated that the memorial should contain the names of every American who died in Vietnam or remained missing in action, make no political statement about the war, be in harmony with its surroundings and be contemplative in character. Over 1,400 submissions came in, to be judged anonymously by a panel of eight artists and designers. In the end, the panel passed over every professional architect in favor of 21-year-old Yale University student Maya Lin, who had created her design for a class. "From the very beginning I often wondered, if

it had not been an anonymous entry 1026 but rather an entry by Maya Lin, would I have been selected?" she would later write.

3. The memorial was originally quite controversial.

Many people commended Lin's winning design, with a former ambassador to South Vietnam calling it a "distinguished and fitting mark of respect" and the New York Times saying it conveyed "the only point about the war on which people may agree: that those who died should be remembered." But others lambasted it as an insult. Author Tom Wolfe called it "a tribute to [anti-war activist] Jane Fonda," Vietnam veteran Jim Webb, a future U.S. Senator, referred to it as "a nihilistic slab of stone," and political commentator Pat Buchanan accused one of the design judges of being a communist. Some critics even resorted to racially insulting Lin, the daughter of Chinese immigrants. Eventually, a compromise was reached—against Lin's wishes—under which a U.S. flag and a statue of three servicemen were dedicated near the wall in 1984. Nine years later, yet another sculpture was added of three women caring for an injured soldier. Not only did the controversy quickly quiet down, but the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has since become both widely praised and wildly popular. "It is still far and away the greatest memorial of modern times—the most beautiful, the most heart-wrenching, the most subtle, and the most powerful," a Vanity Fair commentator wrote earlier this year.

4. Names are still being added to the memorial.

When the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was first dedicated three

continued on next page...

decades ago, Lin's wall contained the names of 57,939 American servicemen believed to have lost their lives in the Vietnam War. But since then, that number has jumped to 58,282. In fact, 10 new names were engraved this year, including that of a marine corporal whose 2006 death from a stroke was determined to be the result of wounds received in action in 1967. Meanwhile, a few survivors have had their names erroneously chiseled into the wall. In order to be added, a deceased soldier must meet specific U.S. Department of Defense criteria, and those postwar casualties not eligible for inscription on the wall are honored instead with an onsite plaque.

5. Offerings are left at the memorial nearly every day.

Tens of thousands of so-called artifacts have been intentionally left at the memorial since its opening, including letters, POW/MIA commemorative bracelets, military medals, dog tags, religious items and photographs. One person even left behind a motorcycle. Rangers from the National Park Service collect these items every day and,

with the exception of unaltered U.S. flags and perishables, send them to a storage facility in Maryland. Though that facility is not open to the public, certain memorial artifacts are put on view as part of traveling exhibits. Such artifacts will also be displayed at an education center scheduled for completion in 2014.

6. All of the names were read out loud this year for the fifth time.

As part of the wall's 30th anniversary celebration, all 58,282 names were read out loud just prior to Veterans Day. Volunteers, Vietnam vets, family members of the deceased and employees of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund started reading the names last Wednesday afternoon. Except for breaks from midnight to 5 a.m. each day, they didn't finish until Saturday night. Every name was similarly read out loud in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2007.

Article by Deconstructed History

Article courtesy of the November 2016 *Houston Letter Carrier*

Delivering in the Dark

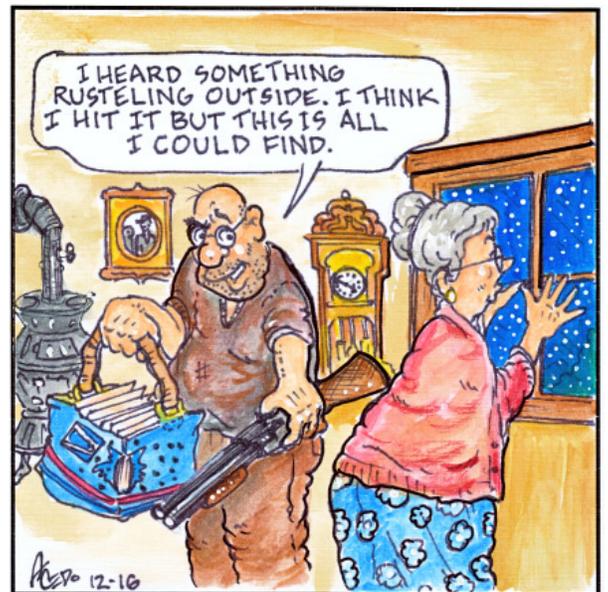
It is almost that time of year again when daylight savings time ends and Carriers tend to spend more time delivering in the dark. Delivering mail in the dark is never an easy task, but darkness in itself is not unsafe. However, cutting across lawns could be unsafe, not being able to see your own steps in front of you is unsafe, delivering in a crime-ridden area is unsafe, and not being able to see dogs is unsafe.

"OuT tHeRe"



You have the right to refuse an instruction to deliver mail in these conditions. When these conditions exist, inform your supervisor how it is unsafe for you to deliver to the area you believe is unsafe. Darkness can contribute to an unsafe situation. For example, you are walking across a lawn, it is not well lighted, and you trip over a sprinkler and stumble. You get up and then trip over a skateboard in the lawn. You may want to declare that swing as unsafe and move to the next swing. This rule applies to every swing.

"OuT tHeRe"



Do not finger mail if it is hard to see while you are walking.

Delivering mail in the dark may also affect your street delivery time. Especially if you are unfamiliar with the route, it could take you longer than expected to deliver. You should not be delivering mail with a flashlight. They are not approved equipment. Many Carriers enjoy the overtime this time of year, but you must keep in mind that your safety always comes first.

You will need to be able to defend the decision to curtail mail delivery with specific safety problems on the territory you brought back. This article is not to supercede any past practices in your city or any local agreements.

Article courtesy of the Garden Grove, CA October-November-December 2017 NALC Branch 1100 *UNION CARRIER*

IN FRED ACEDO'S WORLD "OUT THERE"

THESE ARE THE DOG DAYS
OF LETTER CARRIERS



In the real world, dog attacks are serious business. But, Letter Carriers all over will identify with the dog humor in that reality that we live daily.

OUT THERE



"OuT tHeRe"



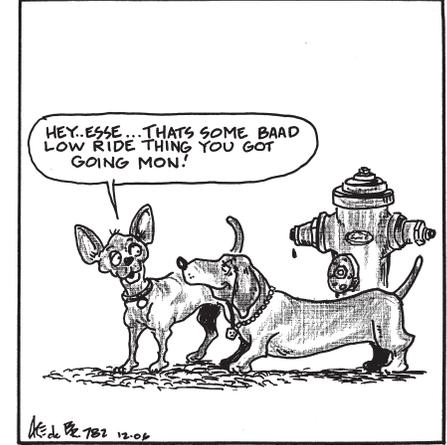
OUT THERE



"OuT tHeRe"



OUT THERE



"OuT tHeRe"



OUT THERE



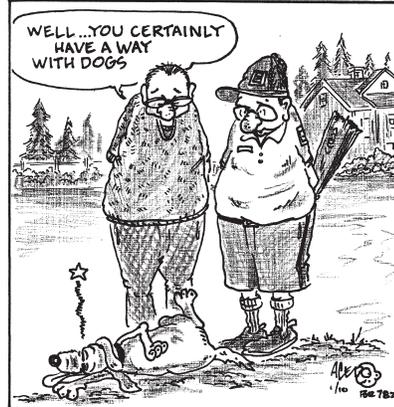
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OUT THERE



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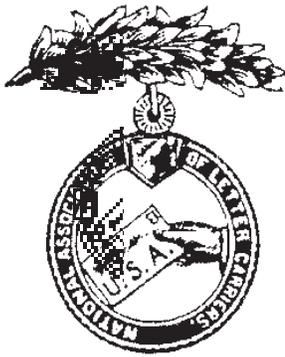


"OuT tHeRe"



Any
Cartoon
Ideas??

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

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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. E-mails are preferred...

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

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General Meeting Wednesday November 15, 2017 7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

*The November General Meeting will be held on the **THIRD** Wednesday of this month so as not to conflict with your Holiday plans. **PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND SHOW UP ON NOVEMBER 15!!***

OUT THERE



WE HONOR OUR VETERANS!!



From a series of murals at the corner of 20th and Eye Street in Bakersfield, California

Print Version of the newsletter had 20 pages. Web Version you are looking at has 24 pages! More Schtuff!