

# 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 12

DECEMBER 2015



**THE BRANCH 782 EXECUTIVE BOARD AND SHOP STEWARDS WISH EVERY SINGLE MEMBER AND YOUR FAMILY THE MOST HEALTHY & HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!**

# Family Medical Leave?

## How can that have anything to do with ME??

by Tony Weddle, President  
NALC Branch 14

residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or subsequent treatment in connection with or subsequent to such inpatient care.

(2) Absence plus treatment — a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive full calendar days (including any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition) that also involves either one of the following:

As most of you are aware, there have been a very high number of resignations by CCA's over the past several weeks. This has basically caused a staffing shortage for many units across the Louisville installation.

There are also a considerable number of retirement applications from regular Carriers who appear to be lining up to get out of what many now consider an organization in calamity.

As a result of this staffing shortage, local management has evidently decided to handle the situation with increased discipline issued to Carriers for unscheduled absences.

Even though there isn't supposed to be a threshold or number of unscheduled absences used to justify the issuance of discipline, it appears management considers three unscheduled absences in a six month period as unacceptable and reason to issue discipline.

Our Vice-President and the majority of our Stewards who are experiencing an increase in attendance discipline are doing a great job of protecting the rights of our members. However, when they've questioned members who have received discipline for attendance, it's has been discovered that several absences may have been FMLA protected — and that the issuance of discipline could have been avoided all together.

Therefore, the following provisions from the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) are listed in the hope that they may be of assistance to many of our members. Use them for your protection pertaining to unscheduled absences. Rememer: If you don't know your Rights, you don't have any Rights! And, **THAT** is a fact!!!

Obviously I can't list all the provisions relative to FMLA regulations in this article, so I've listed the basics and stressed a provision relative to coverage for a health condition that many carriers have evidently overlooked. For additional information pertaining to FMLA coverage go to our national website at NALC.org.



*(NOTE: The NALC website recently published the latest FLMA guidelines. See those to make sure that you make the best possible decisions concerning your own individual circumstances!)*

### ELM SECTION 515

#### 515.1 Purpose

Section 515 provides policies to comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA).

#### 515.2 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of Absence for Family Care or Illness of Employee: (starting at 515.2.i)

(i) Serious health condition — illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves any of the following:

(1) Hospital care — inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital or

(a) Treatment two or more times by a health care provider within 30 days of the first day of incapacity.

(b) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion within 7 days of the first day of incapacity that results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider.

### "OuT tHeRe"



(3) Pregnancy — any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care.

(4) Chronic condition requiring treatments — a chronic condition that meets all of the three following conditions:

(a) Requires periodic visits (i.e., at least twice a year) for treatment by a health care provider or by a nurse or physi

cian's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider.

(b) Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition).

(c) May cause episodic, rather than a continuing period of, incapacity. Examples of such conditions include diabetes, asthma, and epilepsy.

### 515.3 Eligibility

For an absence to be covered by the FMLA, the employee must have been employed by the Postal Service for an accumulated total of 12 months and must have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours during the 12-month period before the date leave begins.

### 515.4 Leave Requirements

#### 515.41 Conditions

Eligible employees must be allowed a total of up to 12 workweeks of leave within a Postal Service leave year for one or more of the following:

- a. For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth.
- b. To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care.
- c. To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition.
- d. For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.
- e. Because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the Armed Forces.

### 515.52 Documentation

In all cases, it is the employee's responsibility to provide complete and sufficient medical certification to establish a serious health condition as defined under the FMLA. For their own serious health conditions, employees may submit Department of Labor Form WH-380-E, FMLA Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition, which is provided in the FMLA packet mailed to employees' homes. These forms are provided for the employee's convenience, as they solicit all required information; however, employees may use another format as long as it provides complete and sufficient information as required by the FMLA. The information provided should relate only to the specific reason associated with the request for leave protection.

Employees must provide documentation directly to the FMLA Office at the Human Resources Shared Services Center (HRSSC) within 15 days of receipt of the request. **(NOTE: See information on how how and where to submit the documentation in the box at the end of this article.)**

Additional documentation may be requested of the employee if the information received is incomplete or insufficient for an FMLA determination, and this must be provided within 7 days unless it is not practicable under the particular facts and circumstances despite the employee's diligent good-faith efforts.

When the need for leave is due to a serious health condition that lasts beyond a single leave year, the employee may

### "OuT tHeRe"



be required to provide a new medical certification in each subsequent leave year.

Failure to provide complete and sufficient documentation may result in the denial of FMLA protection.

## Shared Services

National Human Resources

1-877-477-3273

<http://liteblue.usps.gov>

You'll need your Employee ID#  
(found on your paystub)  
and your USPS PIN.

Article courtesy of the Louisville, KY  
NALC Branch 14 Newsletter  
published in October 2015



# Minutes of the November 2015 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 November, 2015 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. Also present was the Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; SANE Fred Acedo; Photographer Anita Holderman; Asst. Treasurer Debbie Guillet; Asst. Recording Secretary Norma Hamer; OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes and Frank Martinez and Basil Zuniga of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Delano, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South and Stockdale. The Minutes of the October 27, 2015 were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Basil Zuniga reported that last month was Camino Media station's turn to fold the newsletter. The AO's will fold in January. Frank Martinez reported that the Social and Recreation Committee has tickets for the Condors game on November 28th for \$20 and tickets for the Melodrama on December 7th for \$20. They are working on getting tickets for the Holiday Lights at CALM. The Social and Recreation Committee will be delivering cookies to the stations soon. Kim Gerdes reported that there are 972 "Out tHeRe" books remaining to be sold. Mark Ramirez informed those interested in changing to the NALC Health Benefit Plan that he has a handout available. See him following the meeting. He also reminded everyone that the NALC HBP is a Union owned non-profit plan. Molly Biggar reported that the balance on the Food Drive cards is \$676.00. The original cost was \$1650.00. Mike Towery asked if everyone had voted, the polls were closed at 7:16.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Paul Greenfield asked about the NBU's being broken into. Mike had brought it up at the Presidents Meeting and our District Manager did not know anything about a theft problem in Bakersfield. A discussion was held about the problem. Mark Ramirez made a Motion that we have a potluck at the December General Meeting, the Branch will provide the main dish. Seconded by Jerry Patterson, the Motion passed. Mike reported that the Steward meetings will be on December 2 and 9. He reported that there are two residual positions; therefore, 2 CCA's should be promoted by December 27th. Mike discussed the "new thing": management is sending anyone who is injured on the job and has limitations to be being sent to the plant to work nights from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. He reported that Vanessa DeLuna will be the Alternate Steward in Arvin. Marci Rodriguez will be the Assistant Financial

Secretary and Norma Hamer is now the Assistant Recording Secretary. Kim Gerdes asked that anyone with calendar money please turn it in, and there are still some calendars still available. Mike Towery discussed the Carrier in Ridgecrest who was issued a removal. Mike settled that it would be thrown out, during the meeting management issued him another removal which Mike got reduced to a 14 day suspension. Mike thanked 93555 Steward Lynnel Howell for all her work on these grievances by conducting interviews and doing research. Mike reported that Carriers received a contractual wage increase. Regular Carriers received \$.27 per hour/\$16.00 per month; CCA's received \$.38 per hour/\$65.00 per month. This raise is enough to pay the dues of the non-member CCA's for the rest of their career. Basil Zuniga discussed that since the new PM General has been in office, things have gotten worse. Carriers have been harassed. He reminded everyone that management is not "your friend." You may socialize with them but "when push comes to shove" they will not protect you. Mark Ramirez presented Molly Biggar with a poem, Fred Acedo drew a cartoon to accompany the poem. Darryl Holderman reported that there will be a Retirement Breakfast for Basil Zuniga on December 6th at 7:30 a.m. at Noriega's. See your steward to sign up. The cost will be \$10.00 at the door.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that \$6,689.87 was collected for November.

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

Beginning Balance	\$70,069.24
Dues and Income	\$11,938.52
Total Balance	\$82,007.76
Total Expenses	\$12,518.84
Ending Balance	\$69,488.92

Kim Gerdes made a motion that the meeting be recessed until the ballots are counted. Seconded by Jerry Patterson and passed.

The meeting was called back to order at 7:57 p.m. The results are Teresa Ortega 26, Kim Gerdes 23, Shari Sharp 23, Basil Zuniga 23, Norma Hamer 22, Mike Meza 19, Molly Biggar 18, Judy Kiyoshi 17, Paul Salazar 16, Mark Ramirez 16, Rick Gerdes 15, Tami Foshee 13, Frank Martinez 13, Jerry Patterson 13, Randy Courson 11, Evelyn Gauthier 8, Debbie Guillet 8, Herminia Encinas 7, Stephanie MacLaughlin 6, Paul Greenfield 6, Denise Ream 5, Marisela Rodriguez 5, Deven Patterson 5, Maria Valenzuela 5, Barbara Wilde 4 and Jasvir Sangha 2. Mike reminded the delegates that they are all delegates to the convention. To receive compensation, the delegate must attend 10 of the 12 meetings prior to the convention. The Branch pays for the delegates' room, per diem and mileage.

The 50/50 Food Drive Card drawing was won by Judy Kiyoshi who donated her winnings back to pay for the Food Drive cards. The Drawing for \$150 would have been won by Joaquin Samano from Hillcrest if he had been present. There were 37 members present and one guest. The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

KIM GERDES

# Non-Member List November 2015\*

## Downtown Station

S. Kirby  
J. Cruz  
D. Zuniga

## South Station

M. Martinez

## Brundage/East Bakersfield

100% UNION!!!

## Hillcrest

100% UNION!!!

## Dole Court

D. Morris

## Stockdale

J. Oh

## Camino Media

C. Rodriguez

## Arvin

100% UNION!!!

## Avenal

100% UNION!!!

## California City

100% UNION!!!

## Delano

C.V. Quebral  
D. Barreto

## Lamont

100% UNION!!!

## Ridgecrest

G.D. Schatz

## Shafter

M. D. Voights  
L. M. New

## Taft

A. Veach  
B. M. Krier  
K. J. Hughes

## Tehachapi

B. C. Den Beeman

## Trona

100% UNION!!!

## Wasco

100% UNION!!!



\*CCA names are in Italics

With only 16 non-members, we are

**98.03% organized!**

## A VERY "MERRY CHRISTMAS", TO EVERYONE!!

by Mark Ramirez

(poet at large)

The Golden Empire Branch 782

Holiday spirit, Christmas cheer!  
Festive music, end of year!  
Colorful presents, a beautiful tree!  
Families together, as it should be!  
Many miles traveled, by auto, by air!  
Arriving safely, with memories to share!

A golden baked turkey,

Mashed potatoes and ham!

Unbelievable stuffing, and candied yams!

The desserts are amazing,

Sample all, is my trend!

If I taste only one, I just might offend!

Compassion, caring, keeping the faith!

Blessing all families,

Stay healthy and safe!



# Your Most Important Decision of the Day...

by Bob Ernst, NALC Branch 2128 Joint Safety Task Force

Making smart decisions on safety could affect the rest of your life! The reason why I'm saying this and believe this is because two winters ago I took a bad fall on an icy driveway and suffered a concussion. That evening I started experiencing problems with my vision. The problem lingered on for a few months and after further testing I found out I had bruised the area of my brain that affects your sight. Thankfully, I'm fine now but this has made me take a long hard look at safety and the many safety decisions we encounter on our daily routes as letter carriers.

The reason for my first sentence is because when I look back at my fall, I most likely could have taken a safer route back to my truck on that icy January afternoon. Fortunately, my injuries were not life threatening but it could have affected my future as a letter carrier if my sight didn't return. I'm sure there are many people, if given a second chance at making a decision about an accident or incident they were involved in, would take it!

Everyday, we (Letter Carriers) are faced with making decisions about safety from the minute we wake up in the morning to the second our heads hit the pillow at night. Some of these decisions we could make in the early morning might be to drink plenty of water and start hydrating our bodies to fight the

struggle of heat exhaustion and dehydration in the hot summer months. Or, how about checking the weather on a weather app or the local news to make sure we're prepared for what ever Mother Nature has in store for us. Here's one that I need to work on, giving myself enough time in the morning so I'm not rushing around and cutting corners to punch in on time. Now, these are all possible situations we could encounter before we even punch BT (Begin Tour).

Let's take a look at some of the many safety decisions we may run into once we start our day as a Letter Carrier. So after we punch Begin Tour, our responsibility as letter carriers is to perform a vehicle check for any possible deficiencies our vehicle may have. By deciding not to perform your vehicle check we're compromising our safety by traveling in a vehicle that may possibly be unsafe. Please take the time to check your vehicle everyday so you'll have the peace of mind that your vehicle is as safe as it can possibly be.

Now, once we arrive back at our work area and withdraw the mail onto the ledge of our case, we have another safety decision to make with all the empty equipment we've just created. Umm, should I stack it neatly to the side of our case where no one could trip or fall or throw it carelessly to the back of our

work area where we or someone else could possibly slip, trip or fall over the empty equipment? I'm sure these things may sound trivial but they only take a few seconds to do and could ultimately help avoid a life time of pain and suffering.

As we head out to the street to deliver our mail I'd like to touch on a few possible decisions we may come across throughout our day. I say a few because at every possible delivery there could be a hazard just waiting to ambush us. We need to be aware of our surroundings, choose safe park points, and don't park across from a driveway where someone could possibly back into your vehicle if distracted. Make sure you're prepared when you exit your vehicle with your dog spray and satchel, your first line of defense if you happen to encounter a hungry unhappy dog.

In icy conditions make sure you're wearing your grippers to avoid slipping and take a safe path to the customer's front door. Sometimes it's safer walking through a couple of inches of snow rather than walking up a freshly shoveled slick driveway.

When the weather conditions change during the day, please decide to increase your following distance, this will help when you apply the brakes as you may need some extra real estate in between you and the vehicles around you. Remember our LLV's and FFV's do have "blind spots"



which are created by the side mirrors on both sides of the truck.

It's so very easy to roll through a stop sign in the nice quiet neighborhood you've been delivering in for the past several hours. Especially, since you haven't seen many cars traveling on the road for some time. Then oops! Someone enters the intersection at the same time you decided to just tap your brake and not come to a full stop. And with the blind spot we never saw that car because it was hidden behind the mirror. Please decide to come to a full stop as that would obviously be the safer choice.

Finally, Day Light Savings time will be ending about the time you're reading this newsletter. Make sure to check your dome light daily and also the tread on your tires.

These reminders are just some possible scenarios letter carriers may encounter during our busy day. So please, make smart safety decisions because the wrong choice on safety could affect you for the rest of your life! Safe traveling!

Article courtesy of the Fall 2015 issue of the Toms River, New Jersey NALC Branch 2128 *UNION VISION*

Believe it or not, YOU are the best person who can protect YOU...

Think about this! Who is the single person who is most impacted by how you are treated? Who is the person who has to deal with the supervisor that you have? Who has to deal with questions about your performance? So, if *YOU* are so important, ask yourself this:

# Do I KNOW my Contractual Rights?

## **M39-111.2 Daily Operations**

The delivery service manager must on a daily basis: Issue Form 1571 when the Carrier is instructed to curtail mail, indicating action thereon. Upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided the Carrier.

## **M39-126.12**

Verify the type and amount of mail curtailed to see if it agrees with that shown on Forms 1571, Undelivered Mail Report, and 3921, Daily Delivery Unit Volume Recording Worksheet. (A simple system is to measure in linear feet and inches the amount of mail curtailed and multiply by the number of pieces per foot per class of mail; 225 pieces per foot for average letter-size circulars, 115 pieces per foot for average flat circulars, and 1,200 pieces per foot for average post card circulars.) (See Handbook M-32, Management Operating Data System for MOD 1 Offices.)

## **M41-131.44**

Report on Form 1571 all mail undelivered — including all mail distributed to the route but not cased and taken out for delivery. Estimate the number of pieces of mail.

**M41-131.45** Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager, in which case you must record all facts on Form 1571.

**M41-131.46** Before you leave the office, enter on Form 1571 the mail curtailed; when you return, add any mail which was not delivered and which was returned to the office. Follow any special local procedures set up to identify errors and corrective actions for mail returned because it was out of sequence.

Ask yourself this question: **DO I UNDERSTAND WHAT I JUST READ?**

Here are a few hints: The **M-41** is a USPS manual which details the things that **YOU** are being held accountable for. The **M-39** is a manual which presents the information that your **SUPERVISOR** will hold you accountable for. With that as a beginning, take a look at the previous lines about what a PS Form 1571 is supposed to be used for. It should be important to you...

Okay, we are now in that Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Holiday Period? So what does Article 16 of the the Contract say about **YOUR** Rights?

The intent of Article 11.6 is to permit the maximum number of full-time regular, full-time flexible and part-time regular employees to be off on the holidays should they desire not to work while preserving the right of employees who wish to work their holiday or designated holiday.

Article 11.6.B provides the scheduling procedure for holiday assignments. Keep in mind that Article 30.B.13 provides that “the method of selecting employees to work on a holiday” is a subject for discussion during the period of local implementation. The Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) may contain a local “pecking order.” In the absence of LMOU provisions or a past practice concerning holiday assignments, the following minimum pecking order should be followed:

- 1) All casual and part-time flexible employees to the maximum extent possible, even if the payment of overtime is required.
- 2) All full-time regular, full-time flexible and part-time regular employees who possess the necessary skills and have volunteered to work on their holiday or their designated holiday—by seniority.
- 3) All full-time regular, full-time flexible and part-time regular employees who possess the necessary skills and have volunteered to work on their non-scheduled day—by seniority.
- 5) Full-time regular, full-time flexible and part-time regular employees who possess the necessary skills and have not volunteered on what would otherwise be their non-scheduled day—by inverse seniority.
- 6) Full-time regular, full-time flexible and part-time regular employees who possess the necessary skills and have not volunteered on what would otherwise be their holiday or designated holiday—by inverse seniority.

The preceding information (in a different format) originally appeared in the November-December 2015 NALC Branch 2902 *Mail Bag News*.

# An “Estimate”? **YES** — An “Estimate!!!”

by Patrick Mullen, Vice-President  
NALC Branch 2008

**A**n “Estimate” is defined as to “roughly calculate”, “judge the value of” or an “approximate calculation of”...

Sounds easy enough.

But, when you are dealing with postal management, it’s not quite so easy. Especially when you are being asked to give an estimate of how you are going to be for your day after **ONLY** ten minutes after you punch on!!! **It’s simply a form of intimidation and harassment.**

So, to counter this intimidation, we are going to have to be smart.

When asked for your estimate, remember, it is just that: **AN ESTIMATE**. You can change your estimate at any time during the day up to 3 o’clock — and indeed after that — if there is a valid reason. That means, that the estimate you give 10 minutes after you punch on can be revised when you are walking out the door!

Carriers generally know how they are going to be when they are ready to leave and will give a much more accurate estimate at that time.

But, getting back to 10 minutes after you punch on: Ask the supervisor what your parcel and SPR count is. Ask what your DPS count is. Then, ask what THEIR projections are. This will give you a chance to come up with an estimate. Don’t get bent out of shape about it. Remember: **it is just AN ESTIMATE.**

One last note on your estimate: **Don’t put in for time that you don’t need.**

Now, we will address one of the other forms of intimidation and harassment that’s going on: **“Out by 9!”**

Heaven forbid we can’t hit the street by nine o’clock! The postal gods are going to strike the building with a powerful bolt of lightning or sink us into a giant sinkhole.

## *Really????!!!????*

Well, let’s take a look at your a.m. duties and the time you are going to need to get on the street.

Considering that you have 33 minutes of fixed office time, if you start at 7.30, it’s going to be closer to nine when you are moving to the street...

Now, let’s say you have four feet of mail.

That’s going to take you about an hour to case. (A simple system is to measure in linear feet and inches the amount of mail and multiply by the number of pieces per foot per class of mail. **WHAT????**)

A simple system is to “measure” 225 pieces per foot for average letter-size circulars ;115 pieces per foot for average flat circulars, and 1,200 pieces per foot for average post card circulars.) (See Handbook M-32, Management Operating Data System for MOD 1 Offices to see how the USPS does it.)

If you have more mail than that, you are going to have to ask the supervisor what they want you to do. Do this early, don’t wait! If they tell you to curtail mail, then do so and ask for a curtailment slip (PS Form 1571).

Your supervisor may try to tell you that you don’t use all of your fixed office time. **WELL, WHY WOULDN’T YOU USE YOUR FIXED OFFICE TIME???** *Think about it...*

You get 3-5 minutes to do a vehicle check. You get 5 minutes of personal needs time. You get time to make changes to your edit book. You get time to verify if your DPS is correct (if you can find it).

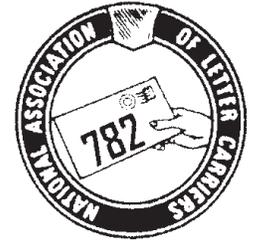
You get time to check your hold mail and to do your forwards. You get time to get your accountable items and write the address on a PS Form . You get time to get your keys. You get time to go to the throwback case and pick up your hot case mail. You get time to case in your SPRS. And you get time to pull your route down. **If you don’t use it...you lose it!!!**

### **THAT TIME ADDS UP!!!!**

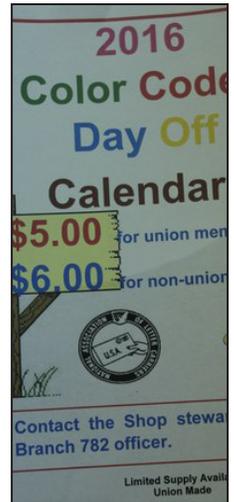
Use the time that is legitimately needed to accomplish your duties!, This is the absolute best way to stop the harassment and intimidation!

The preceding information (in a different format) originally appeared in the November 2015 NALC Branch 2008 *Suncoast Letter Carrier’s Update.*

# A big thank you to every Steward!!!



There's times when a Steward does what a Steward has to do.



**NALC Branch 782 Stewards meet twice a month to focus on updating skills... for YOU!**



Pix courtesy of Anita Holderman and Rick Plummer via the Branch 782 website!

# 2015 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	1-888-636-6252
<b>"24/7 Nurse Hotline"</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
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)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
<b>CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount)</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	1-800-333-4636
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	(661) 631-9258
<b>Shared Services Option 5 live person</b>	<b>1-877-477-3273</b>

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

*\* Failure to pre-certify for in-patient hospitalization will result in a \$500 reduction. YOU MUST notify the Plan prior to undergoing outpatient 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 \$4 generic, \$37 formulary, \$52 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$6 generic, \$55 formulary, \$70 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$4 for NALCSENIOR 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:** *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 (OPA 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**

**Preferred Provider (PPO)**  
**Cost: \$20.00 Co-pay per office visit**  
**(PPO) Deductible: \$300 Individual,**  
**\$600 Self & Family—Per Calendar Year**

**Health Risk Assessment\*** The Health Risk Assessment (HRA) is an online tool that analyzes your health related responses and gives you a personalized plan to achieve your specific health goals. Your HRA profile provides you information to put you on a path to good physical and mental health. Your personal health information is stored on a secure database. When you complete the HRA in 2015, we will enroll you in the CignaPlus SavingsSM discount dental program and pay the **Self-Only** CignaPlus SavingsSM discount dental premium for the remainder of the calendar year in which you completed the HRA provided you remain enrolled in our Plan. If you have **Self and Family** coverage with our Plan, when at least two family members complete the HRA in 2015, we will enroll you and your covered family members in the CignaPlus SavingsSM discount dental program and pay the family CignaPlus SavingsSM discount dental premium. (\*High Option)

"This is a summary of some of the features of the NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option. Detailed information on the benefits for the 2016 NALC Health Benefit Plan can be found in the official brochure (RI 71-009). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the official brochure."

## "OuT tHeRe"



# GOOD GOLLY, MISS MOLLY!

Molly, is our Branch Treasurer,  
Letter Carrier, her occupation!  
Happy to be retired,  
No more time clock at Dole Station!

Taxes, budget, payroll,  
Insurance information!  
Watching every penny,  
With union dedication!

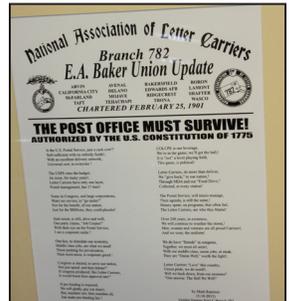
Molly, is well respected,  
Sometimes witty, yet quite shy!  
You'd never guess, her monikers are,  
Secret Service, F. B. I.!

Devoted, honest, and precise,  
That's Molly, oh, for sure!  
Knowledge and commitment,  
What would we do without her?!

by Mark Ramirez (Poet at Large), Golden Empire NALC Branch 782

# Why do we go to Union Meetings???

## To protect our jobs...*and* to socialize!



Some Views of the August 25, 2015 General Meeting

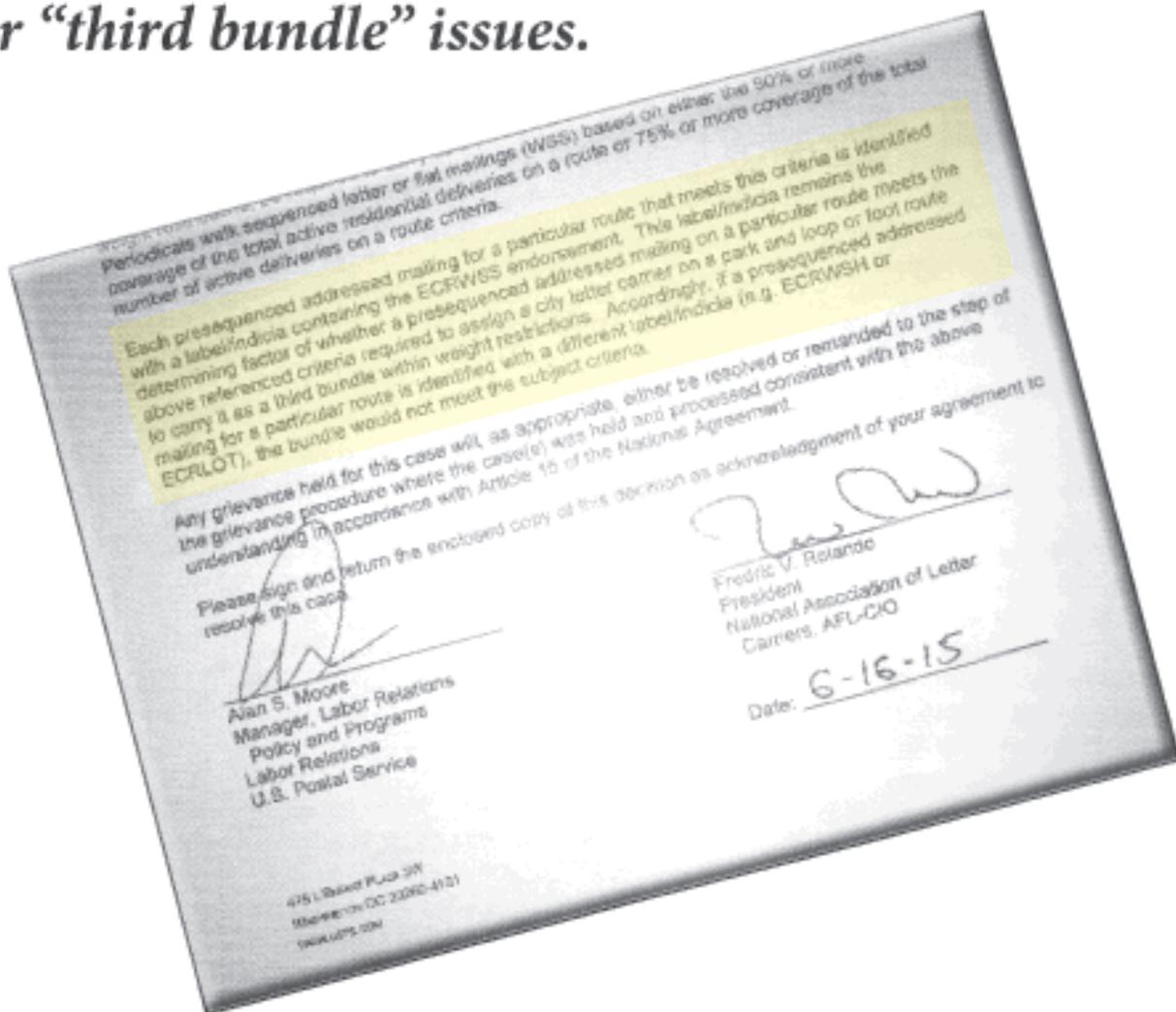


Some Views of the September 22, 2015 General Meeting

Again, thanks mucho much for these pix to Branch 782 Photographer Anita Holderman and Webmaster Rick Plummer via the Branch 782 website!

# ECRWSS:

*New Memorandum gives clarity to prior confusion over "third bundle" issues.*



Through the years, there has been much confusion regarding the carrying of a "third bundle" on foot routes/park and loop routes. Often, the misunderstanding caused much friction between carriers and management. In June of this year, a national Memorandum of Understanding (M-01861) was signed, stating clear definitions of what constitutes a viable "third bundle."

In the past, both carriers and management were left with trying to determine if mailings had a 75 or 90% coverage, depending on type of route. This confusing system is now replaced with codes clearly printed on the mailing labels themselves. The three most common codes are:

- ECRL0T - Enhanced Carrier Route Line of Travel
- ECRWSH - Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence High Density
- ECRWSS - Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence Saturation

What is most important to remember is that, for carriers on park and loop or foot delivery routes, ONLY mailings marked with the ECRWSS designation on the label/indicia meet the criteria to be carried as a "third bundle". Any other designations do not meet the "third bundle" criteria. However, just because a mailing has the ECRWSS code, do not assume the mailing will be in perfect order.

Information courtesy of the Volume 34 #2 Summer 2015 NALC Branch 3825 Branch 3825 UNITY

# Turning a Negative into a Positive!

I'm going to try to write a positive article this month but I know that some people reading this will take it negatively. That just comes with the territory I guess.

In fact, the person I write about took offense to a piece I wrote a few years back and although that column I wrote was meant to put a positive spin on a time when morale in our office was at an all-time low, she felt I was very negative in

how I brought her up in the story. I used her name to make a point about one of our supervisors in Lakehurst who was well known for his aggressive and intimidating management style. She didn't like my reference to her and did not really understand that the offense was not meant for her at all.

That is all water way beyond the bridge now and the thoughts evaporated over time. But I want to talk about

it now because I need to clear my conscience and set the record straight.

Our shop steward, Tracy Rosell, resigned last month. She said it was for personal reasons but everyone who works in that office knows why she quit. And it's probably the biggest reason why a lot of union reps leave their jobs. Everyone who's done it knows the cliché 'that the shop steward really is a thankless job.' But she didn't quit for lack of thanks.

Uh-oh. I feel myself drifting toward negativity and I'm sure Tracy will be upset that I'm writing this column about her, but that's a risk I'm willing to take right now. Anyway, let me get on that positive track before I drift too far.

Tracy was one of the best shop stewards Lakehurst has ever had—in the Top 2 for sure—and I should know as I've been there for over 35 years and I've seen lots of them come and go. She knew her job as a steward and was relentless in her pursuit for the just and fair for every carrier in the office. 100% effort and I don't think I ever saw her back down when she dealt with management. And those efforts didn't go unnoticed at levels above and beyond Lakehurst.

At a recent NALC seminar in Washington, DC, I met up with a district union rep, Joe Otero, and introduced myself. When I told him I was from Lake-

by Alan Kloza,  
NALC Branch 2128



hurst it was clear that he knew of our office.

"Lakehurst, huh? How's that little firecracker Tracy doing?" was exactly what he said.

Obviously she'd made an impression on him when Joe worked with her on route adjustments in the office. And this is coming from a guy who looks at the big picture, not the petty little stuff that sometimes occupies and needlessly consumes the workroom floor. (I know,...negative again)

If you had a question about your contractual rights as an NALC letter carrier and asked Tracy, she'd always set you straight. And if she didn't know the answer, you could rest assured that she'd have it the next day. A call to the union president, the business agent or hours Googling the internet and she'd have the information for you. Her husband Brian—a self-proclaimed NALC widower—can attest to countless hours she'd spend at home working for the union. Working for YOU!

She saved a carrier's job from excessing, worked

## "OuT tHeRe"



## from the editor-guy:

As I read this article, I thought about the many, many Shop Stewards I have known for the last thirty-six years. Past Branch 782 President Frank Thomasy told me that dealing with management was no big deal — he just let the Contract work for him. "But, fighting your membership? That takes the wind out of your sails." Thank you, Branch 2128 Editor Alan Kloza, for touching on what really *IS* a big deal...

to get others promoted to regular, equalized unfair overtime—you name it, if there was a contractual violation, Ms. Rosell was on it. Firecracker? For sure when it came to union business. She took her job seriously.

It's easy to see why management HATED Tracy but why the hate from the people she wanted to defend?

I think we all know the answer to that question.

First and foremost, she will never win a popularity contest in the office. She can be abrasive, curt, and generally unfriendly if she feels that same vibe from you. She won't hold your hand but she will tell you what to do in no uncertain terms. I had my run-ins with her long ago. There was a dislike that festered for a while but that was before I saw what she could do as a shop steward. At that time, she held no union office, was the biggest 'runner' in the office and complained about most everything the union didn't do for her. Sound familiar? (Uh-oh, there goes that negativity again, sorry)

Secondly, she did an about face from being a runner. By most accounts, she works on one of the Top 3 'easiest' routes in the office. How did she get a route like Route 17? Believe me, she didn't get it because management likes

her. I can attest to that firsthand as I was the union VP and had many discussions with postmasters about her 'dismal' performance as a letter carrier. I would tell them, 'Ok she's slow, but tell me and tell her what she's doing wrong. Correct her deficiencies!'

They tried and tried. She was under the microscope more than anyone ever was in the Lakehurst Post Office. Street observations, formal inspections, mail counts, supervisors brought in from other offices to evaluate her—they did everything they could to get her fired but never could. She did the job by the book and if we all did the job that way, we'd have at least a half-dozen more routes, less accidents, strokes, heart attacks and running into trees in the Lakehurst office.

Management was sure that she was running her 'easy' route and driving home to take a 2-3 hour lunch every day. Even to this day, years later, they surveil her, hoping to catch her and write her up for extending her street time. Ain't gonna happen. She does the route by the book and it's a pretty good book that the union wrote for you that we're all supposed to go by. You should read it sometime! (Oops, there I go again)

Others have tried to get a route like Tracy has and few have succeeded and somehow it's all her fault.

"I had no mail, why don't they pick a normal day

and I'll show them my route is overburdened."

I've heard that 'Why me' cry so many times, I just laugh every time I hear it now. Don't you think that management had the mail cut for Tracy's many inspections, leveled her load to the point where you'd think it'd be next to impossible for her to show overtime? It wasn't for their lack of trying to add on to her routes, I promise you. Most carriers get intimidated easily and can't help but run their routes on inspection. You really have to tell yourself that YOU are in control of the situation and the pace you set is what you get to live with.

Read the book, do your job safely--the same way every day and most importantly, grow a pair. Let them bring it on and be prepared to fight for yourself! Because that's what it takes. But don't blame Tracy because your route sucks and hers is good. (Here's where I get real NEGATIVE and say that—JEALOUSY IS A HORRIBLE THING). Let go of the hate you may feel or at least transfer that energy to a target more deserving, namely bad management, who are in the business of sucking you dry in their relentless search to make their unrealistic numbers.

Finally, I'm going to blame management for this untimely steward resignation as they were obviously fueling the fire started by sparks emanating from certain sections of the workroom floor.

"It's the union that's making me do this to you. Tracy said that I have to do it."

How many times has a supervisor told you that? When your boss says something like that to you, just go to the source and see if that is the case. There are rules in the contract that need to be enforced equally that were agreed upon by union and management. Your boss will always blame the union, when in fact, it is management that is supposed to enforce those rules, many times unequally. That's when your steward has to get involved. It's a common tactic. Divide and conquer works almost every time.

Who knows what the straw was, that broke her back, but I've given you some idea—though negative it may be. But I keep hoping that we can turn the negative into a positive. And Tracy will probably hate me again for going public with this article but I really felt that something needed to be said. If you agree she did a good job, tell her and maybe she'll reconsider her decision.

Come January, we'll be without a steward in Lakehurst as no one was nominated at the September union meeting. I'll probably retire next year so my days of needing a steward are numbered. But the rest of you will need that help, regardless of what you may think of the managers you have now. And when you need that union help, it's nice to know that there's someone in your office who'll go to bat for you. Tracy hits home runs as a shop steward. Now that's something I'm POSITIVE of!

# Turning a Negative into a Positive!

Article courtesy of the Fall 2015 issue of the Toms River, New Jersey NALC Branch 2128 *UNION VISION*

## from the editor-guy:

Here are some pictures of when we got together to get the newsletter ready to mail in June and other months.

Because, if it weren't for all the help provided by members who work at all of our various units, it would probably take me all month just to fold, staple, address and bundle all of the sets. I am truly thankful for all of the help that I get on that one night every month!!!

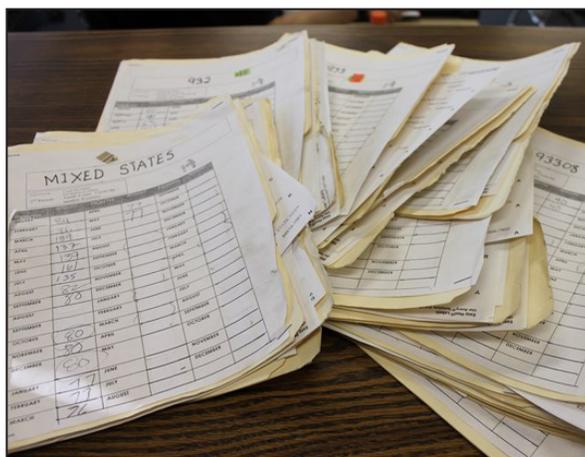
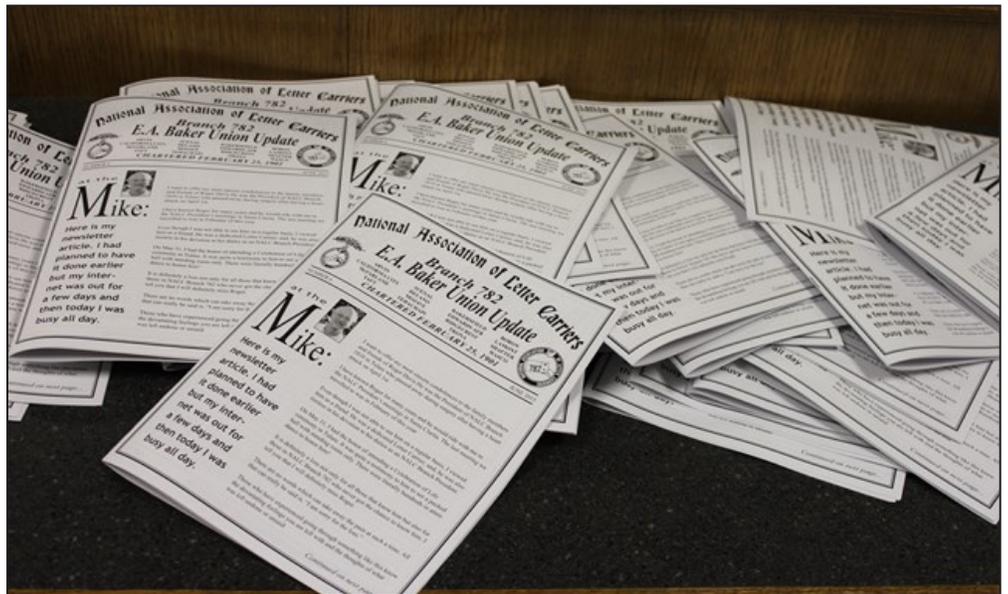
It's just as important for me to point out that without the help of many people each month there would be no newsletter.

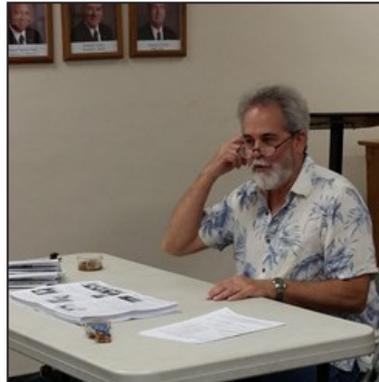
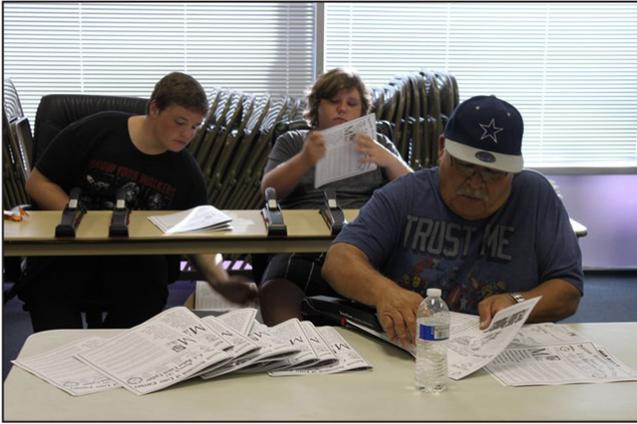
Some folks write articles. Fred Acedo draws his magical cartoons. Molly makes sure that there's enough money to pay for the printing and the postage.

I also reprint many excellent articles which originally appeared in other NALC Branch newsletters.

Thank you, everyone!!! \*\*

BASIL ZUNIGA





\*\* and a special Thank You to Branch 782 Photographer Anita Holderman!!! Without her, there are no pix to share...

At the November General Meeting, Mark Ramirez made a Motion — with a Second from Jerry Patterson — that the Branch provide the main course for the following event:

# **NALC BRANCH 782 CHRISTMAS POTLUCK 7:00 P.M. ON DECEMBER 15, 2015 AT THE BRANCH OFFICE 2628 F STREET**

*The Branch's Pot Luck,  
Will be held in December.  
We hope you'll attend,  
Good food and fun to remember.*

*Bring hot wings, lasagne,  
Or assorted cheese dips,  
Your mincemeat fudge brownies,  
Maybe, pickled pig lips?*

*Make it sour or hot,  
Or something sweet,  
Bring that simple side dish,  
"You" force your family to eat!*

*Make your eye of newt salsa,  
Or flaming kielbasa,  
We'll have a great night,  
Maybe, a Union Food Fight?*

by Mark Ramirez  
(poet at large)  
The Golden Empire Branch 782

## **"OuT tHeRe"**



## **Membership has rewards...**

Each and EVERY month, Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage **YOU** to come to our Meeting\*. *There was no winner in November 2015!!!*

### **Now, YOU could win \$200!!!**

If no one wins in December, it will go up by \$50 each month until there is a winner — or until it hits the max limit of \$500.

\*The fine print: TO WIN THE MONEY **YOU** HAVE TO BE PRESENT WHEN **YOUR** NAME IS DRAWN!



# Branch Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Mike Towery</b>	<b>(661) 331-9171</b>
<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>John Ortega</b>	<b>(661) 809-8140</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Kim Gerdes</b>	<b>(661) 834-2059</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Molly Biggar</b>	<b>(661) 832-0393</b>
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<b>HBP &amp; MBA</b>	<b>Mark Ramirez</b>	<b>(661) 398-6075</b>
<b>Sargeant-at-Arms</b>	<b>Jerry Patterson</b>	<b>(661) 699-2462</b>
<b>Chief Trustee</b>	<b>Frank Martinez</b>	<b>(661) 703-4212</b>
<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Teresa Ortega</b>	<b>(661) 325-5526</b>
<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Darryl Holderman</b>	<b>(661) 332-9201</b>

*E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE* is published monthly by Merged Branch 782 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO.

The options expressed in this publication are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the publication staff or of the Officers of the Branch.

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

Information in this publication may not be used for illegal purposes.

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

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 here-in 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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Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer

## NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

Arvin (93203)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
Avenal (93204)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Delano (93215)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
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)	Joanne Layton	(661) 204-4928
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 Sharp	(661) 364-5544
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Mojave (93501)	Delga Loza	(661) 824-8332
California City (93504)	Ryan Gerstl	(761) 373-4180
Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93523)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Ridgecrest (93555)	Lynnel Howell	(760) 382-3030
Tehachapi (93561)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Trona (93562)	Lynnel Howell	(760) 382-3030

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

**Rick Plummer, Webmaster**



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PAID  
Bakersfield, California  
Permit Number 32

## General Meeting Tuesday December 15, 2015 7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office  
2628 "F" Street  
Bakersfield, California

**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Our General Meeting  
is on the Third  
Tuesday in  
December!!!  
And, we're  
going to have  
a potluck!!!**

*Details on page 6...*

### "OuT tHeRe"



### Attention all Associate Office (AO) Carriers out there...mark January 20 on your calendar!!!

It's that once a year time, once again, where we all come to get together for pizza to fold the monthly newsletter for our great Branch 782! Would appreciate it if you could come and help fold, staple, label, count, and rubber band!

Let's give some of the Bakersfield Carriers a break and come together to fold the monthly newsletter. The Branch will feed us too!! Hope to see you there! We might even have some fun!!

NORMA HAMER  
Shafter Shop Steward

Don't forget to check out the web version of our newsletter at: [www.782nalc.com](http://www.782nalc.com). The colors really "pop" and there's more info, too!