

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
DELANO
MOJAVE

TEHACHAPI

AVENAL
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST

TRONA

BAKERSFIELD
LAMONT
SHAFTER

WASCO

BORON
McFARLAND
TAFT

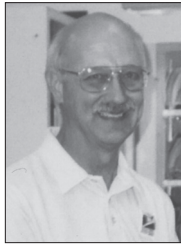


CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901

VOLUME LXXXI NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2009

at the



Mike:

Working on
nineteen

Removals this
year has been
extremely draining.

I am going to rely
on comments by
Fresno Branch 231
President Ken Nunn
this month...

Thank You Carriers!

I want to say thank you to all of you for all you do. Another holiday season has come and gone and now we must wait and see what our future holds. Many of you have told me the holiday season was very light and others have told me the season was very busy.

Whether the volume was light, heavy or somewhere in between, I appreciate what you did during these times—working longer hours, working overtime hours when you are not on an overtime list, working to cover employees that for one reason or another cannot work, working short-handed and working with routes that are sometimes not properly adjusted.

What are they thinking?

I often ask myself, “What the hell are these people thinking??!!”, referring to upper management in both the Sacramento District and the Pacific Area.

Every single route within the Branch 231 area was on the schedule to be inspected this year, a full blown six-day count and inspection. Management has always told us it costs \$5,000.00 per route per week to conduct this week long inspection.

Now we all know the parties at the national level reached a temporary agreement on a new method to adjust routes. Suddenly upper management changed their minds on the number of offices they wanted to

Continued on next page...

count. Now, out of all the offices in our Branch, they only wanted to check the Sanger Post Office. Woodward Park was on the list originally, but was soon removed. I believe this shows how uncommitted upper management is to doing the right thing.

Oh, yeah, of course they threatened us with full blown inspections early in FY 2009, but when they were presented with the new method and could save a ton of money (remember \$5,000.00 per route??) they refused.

Like I said, "What the hell are these people thinking??!" I do not know how many routes we have in the Sacramento District, but it covers 21 offices. Multiply that by \$5,000.00 per route and you can see the potential savings. Yet, they refused. It appears management only thinks of this plan as a route reduction program and not a new route inspection program. Of course there is some cost associated with the new method, but it is minimal in comparison. The Sanger Post Office is almost complete under the new process and we will soon see the results.

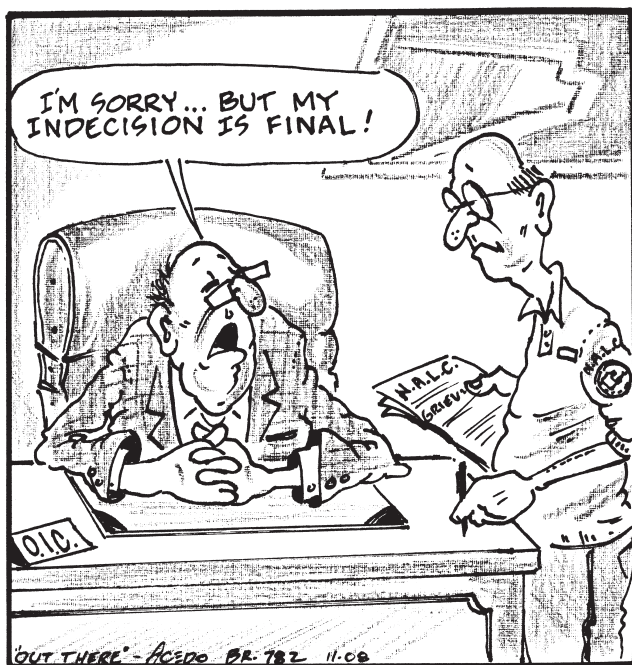
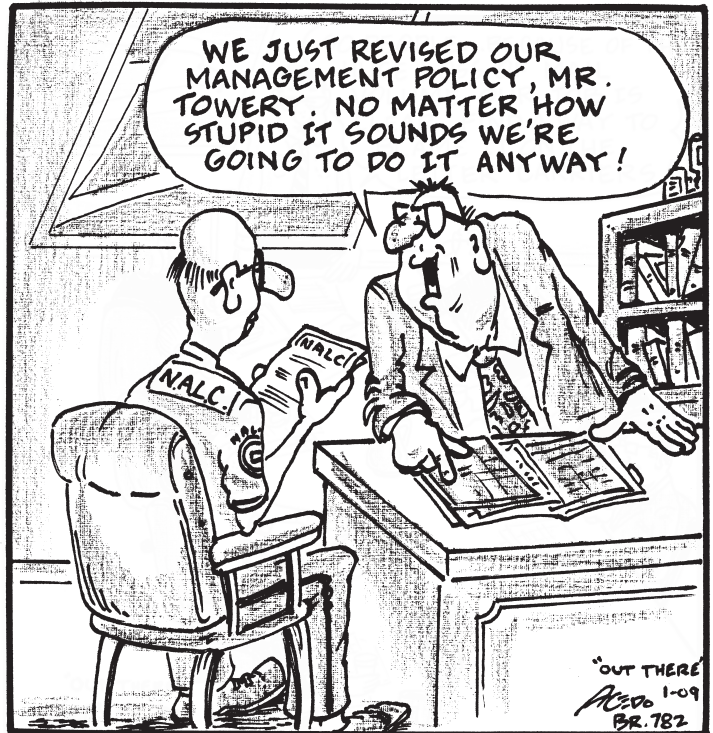
Injured Employees - please be aware of this...

If you are an injured employee and cannot do your carrier duties you will probably be hearing from the USPS in the near future. Local management has informed me they will be starting the process of making job offers, and possibly the removal of some of you off the USPS payroll onto the payrolls of the Department of Labor.

If you are one of these employees, you will soon be receiving a letter from the USPS informing you of an appointment to meet with a committee to discuss your current status and make you a job offer and possibly to discuss your future with the USPS. You will be given at least two weeks notice of this meeting.

This is a mandatory meeting you are required to attend. This is going to happen and it's going to happen soon, so you need to take the necessary steps to ensure the committee has all the medical documentation your doctor wants them to review so they can make a proper job offer.

You have to remember, it is **your** responsibility to obtain all the medical documentation from your doctor. It is your responsibility *and your responsibility alone* to obtain all this information and bring it to your scheduled meeting. Some of you may need to get in and see your doctor prior to your meeting. You are not automatically entitled to Union representation during this meeting, but the Union is allowed to be present **if you personally notify us**. We can attend, *but it must be at your request*.



Minutes of the December 2008 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President, Mike Towery on the 16th day of December 2008 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. At Arms, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards from 01, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, Delano, Lamont, McFarland and Shafter were present. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga, Assistant Editor, Jason Munoz, Emma Gonzales of the Social and Recreation Committee, OWCP Rep. Rick Gerdes, and Danny Blair of the Labor/Management Safety and Health Committee. The minutes of the November 25, 2008 meeting were accepted with no additions or corrections.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Basil Zuniga reported that Dole Ct. folded the newsletter last month. Jason Munoz took care of everything and did a good job cooking. Stockdale Station will fold the newsletter in January. Basil reported that Bonita Lewis submitted a good article about her postal vehicle getting broken into, and Fred's cartoons were good as usual. Emma Gonzales reported that the plans for the Valentines Day Dinner Dance on February 14 are coming along.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that the Open Season for Health Benefits has been extended to January 31, 2009. He also reported that 13,000 people have switched to the NALC Plan. He then reported on the Alternate Route Adjustment Process. Basil Zuniga reported that he spoke with the widow of carrier Emmett Dosier. Mrs. Dosier loaned Basil a book called the "Corn Crib" which was published in 1944 and had letters and photos of letter carriers serving in WWII. Mark Ramirez made a motions that the branch provide food for the January meeting to installation of the branch officers. Seconded by Jerry Patterson and passed. Each station gave a brief report.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$6,830.69 was collected for the month of December.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

	October	November
Beginning Balance	\$54,439.93	\$53,439.93
Dues Income	\$13,268.46	\$12,440.78
Interest Income	\$ 14.67	\$ 13.96
Total Balance	\$67,723.06	\$65,768.79
Expenses	\$14,409.01	\$ 9,808.76
Ending Balance	\$53,314.05	\$55,960.03

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Jerry Patterson. The Drawing for \$350.00 would have been won by Debra Anderson who was not present. There were 37 members present. The meeting adjourned at 7:48. p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
KIM GERDES
Branch 782 Recording Secretary

NON-MEMBER LIST October 2008

DOWNTOWN STATION

Dale Pearce
Javier Cruz

SOUTH STATION

100% Union!!!

EAST BAKERSFIELD

100% Union!!!

HILLCREST

M. M. Henry

BRUNDAGE

David Kinglee
R. R. Torres

DOLE COURT

Susan Webb
Alice Schultz
R. M. Byington
R.E. Tinoco

STOCKDALE

Ron Huston
V.M. Calderon
G.S. Saran

CAMINO MEDIA

F. Medina, Jr.

ARVIN

100% Union!!!

AVENAL

J. T. Howerly

BORON

100% Union!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY

R. A. Day

DELANO

C. V. Quebral

EDWARDS

100% Union!!!

LAMONT

100% Union!!!

McFARLAND

B. A. Ibarra

MOJAVE

100% Union!!!

RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce
H. G. Blanco
A. M. Connell
T. K. Miller
R. M. Nokes

SHAFTER

L. M. New
M. D. Voights

TAFT

B. W. Krier
K. J. Hughes
T. M. Phillips

TEHACHAPI

V. L. Johnson

TRONA

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

WASCO

100% Union!!!

93.1% of all Letter Carriers in our cities are NALC members (423 out of 455). 6.9% are not...

2009 NALC HBP Info

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

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



Branch 782
Health Benefit
Representative

Mark
Ramirez

(661)
834-5011

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

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

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

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, VA 20149

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

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

Contact Information

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

Great Union! Great Health Plan!

With the New Year here, I hope that the Holidays went well and that everyone is healthy! And, I think, that many NALC members have made a decision to have an even healthier year.

The good news is that there have been many people joining the NALC Health Benefit Plan. This is a good thing. The more people that we have in our Plan, the better that our benefits can become. It is important for those of you who have not made the move to realize some important things about the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

The Plan belongs to all NALC Letter Carriers. It was the first type of health insurance for any group of federal employees and has been in existence for many years. It is not a company which is more concerned with making a profit for the stockholders than in providing the best health care possible.

More importantly, I can speak from personal experience about how important it is to have health insurance coverage which has the goal of taking care of its members. When I broke my neck, it cost almost a year and a half of my income to pay for everything. The NALC HBP took great care of my health needs. Jerry Patterson, was more important than profits...

I don't know anyone who would have had enough money in the bank to pay for all of the costs associated with my injury. In fact, the doctors I had didn't even think that I would ever be able to go back to work. But, the NALC Health Benefit Plan paid for the best care available. And, nineteen years later, with the grace of God and the NALC HBP I have been able to continue my career as a Letter Carrier.

It is a fact: ***The NALC Health Benefit Plan is the absolutely best health coverage that any Letter Carrier can have!!!***

But enough of the good news. Let me tell you some other "not so good" things you need to keep in mind.

The vast majority of us just come to work, complain about the circulars or how much volume that we have, deliver the mail, and then go home. This has been the routine for years and years and years. But, by now, I think that most of us have noticed a change...

The bottom has dropped out of the volume. Even the circulars that we thought we were going to have to deliver every single day of the week have disappeared! We are going to be put to the test to survive as an organization. If you haven't figured it out yet, **YOU** are going to be put to the test. If you are a junior employee, I would suggest that you do some research and learn what your Contractual rights and benefits are.

During my career, I have known four of the best Branch 782 Presidents: Tony Chavez, Paul Alexander, Frank Thomasy and Mike Towery. I know that Mike is probably planning to retire within the next few years. I don't know if we have anyone ready, able, and willing to take his place. I'm hoping that—if we all pull together and help each other out—we can have someone be raised up to pick up the challenge and keep this Branch running strong.

To do that, we have to have people willing to learn more about what it takes to make Branch 782 a strong organization. We have to have more of our local members become involved with our functions like the NALC Health Benefit Plan and COLCPE. We have to learn what it means to keep and eye out for the Union Brothers and Sisters who are working by our sides. You might not always like them, or what they do, but they are still your Union Brothers and Sisters. This is how Unionism works: ***We Stick Together!***

Speaking as a Steward, I want to highlight one thing that is very important. Too often, I have experienced a problem when too many people wait for the last minute to get the Union involved in dealing with disciplinary problems which they have. They expect the Union to be able to "fix" it when they are issued a Notice of Removal. Instead of informing the Steward when they receive their very first Letter of Warning, they think that Management will take care of them. Think about *that* for a second...

Learn more about **your** Rights. Learn more about **your** Benefits. Learn more about the proper methods and procedures that a professional Letter Carrier should know and follow! Pick up the good habits that you need to follow each and every day that you walk or drive the routes that you deliver. If you do, you just might be able to survive until you are able to retire.

Really, and truly, it is **your** life which is at stake! Get involved. *Make the right decisions whether they are about your health insurance or about how you do your job!*

JERRY PATTERSON
Branch 782 Sargeant-at-Arms

YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO JOIN THE NALC HBP!

OPM Permits Belated Open Season Period – Enrollment Opportunity Extended to January 31, 2009

Good news all around for the NALC Health Benefit Plan!!! Open Season enrollment figures are pouring in and—as of January 5, 2009—we have already surpassed the Open Season enrollment for the 2007 Open Season. ***Over 22,000 new enrollments have already been received at the Plan!! There is a reason...***

This is just the beginning. Look for BIG numbers to be tabulated before the end of the enrollment period. ***Become an NALC Health Benefit Plan Member today!!!!***

from the
editor-guy

Each person who has a job wakes up to go to work. Some of us wake up in the morning and work all day. Others work nights. And, we do this because we hope that our hard work is going to somehow accomplish something.

Those of us who are parents hope that the money we earn will allow our children to begin to achieve their own goals. From those early days (when they are in our arms, learn to walk, head off to that first day of school, get on a field or court for their initial taste of organized sports, or do any of the other things that they can do) we try to be supportive of our children.

The following three pages are going to highlight the accomplishments of two children of two of our Branch 782 members: Darryl Holderman and Delano retiree Mauricio “Moe” Mascari- nas. I would hope that—in the future—when other dependents do well in their chosen endeavors we can do something to similarly honor them in the pages of this newsletter.

We Letter Carriers are no different in this respect.

BASIL ZUNIGA
Branch 782 Editor-guy

Son of Branch 782 Member wins Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship!

by Anita Holderman
Branch 782 Financial
Secretary

If you attended the Novem- ber general meeting, you witnessed a first for our NALC Branch 782!

After months of trying to coordinate schedules of key people, it all came together.

Among our many guests, National Business Agent, Manny Peralta and our CSALC President, John Beaumont, both attended this special meeting.

Also attending were retired NALC Brother, Mauricio Mascarenas and his wife Teresita.

What was so special about this par- ticular gathering of California Letter Carriers?



John Beaumont, California State Association of Letter Carriers President, presents the schoarship award to Moe and Tessie Mascari- nas as NALC Region 1 National Business Agent Mannie Peralta looks on.



Pictured here, during this proud moment, were (l - r) Health Benefit Representative Mark Ramirez, VP Darryl Holderman, Financial Secretary Anita Holderman, President Mike Towery, Tessie and Moe Mascarenas, National Business Agent Manny Peralta, Treasurer Molly Biggar and Chief Trustee Bill Curtis.

Well, Brother Mauricio and Teresita, accepted the California State Association Saxsenmeier Scholarship on behalf of their son, Timothy. *This is the very first time ever this scholarship has been given to one of "our kids" in Branch 782!!!*

Timothy could not make the meeting because he had already started his classes at San Diego State University. However, his heart-felt and eloquent thanks should give everyone in NALC Branch 782 an opportunity to realize that each of us have made a big difference in the life of someone who is not a member of our immediate family. All of us—in union with our state association of Letter Carriers—have made a difference in the life of our very own Timothy Mascarinas!

My name is Timothy Mascarinas and I am the 18 year old son of Mauricio & Teresita Mascarinas. My mother, Tessie, is currently a clerical worker for the California Highway Patrol for 19 years, and my father, Mauricio is a retired mail carrier for the United States Postal Service for almost 23 years. Since birth, I was raised in a small town called Delano, California until I graduated high school where I attended Cesar E. Chavez High School, and currently attending the University of California, Davis as first-year Biochemistry & Molecular Biology major.

At an early age, I acquired a passion for athletics and music where I've picked up playing basketball, golf, volleyball, billiards, and tennis. In my musical experience, my first instrument was the piano at the age of 4, and I'm in the process of learning how to play saxophone, drums, guitar, and the ukulele as I plan to transition into becoming a Music major in the upcoming years of college. Throughout my life, even to this day, I have become an entertainer and performer in all aspects including my education.

During my high school years I was able to graduate in the Top 20 in my class of about 350. In high school, I was involved in the music program more than anything because I was a student accompanist for my high school choir for 4 years and for a local church choir for 11 years. I also was in our jazz band and regular band. Along with piano playing, many knew me because I displayed not only playing piano, but singing for these activities. Thanks to my choral and band directors, Marcus Dangelo and Alex Gonzales, I was put into leadership roles in music to exceed expectations of performance, discipline, and showmanship within the groups. Performance after performance, concert after concert, my confidence overall has gotten me to where I am today and has shaped me into a great and confident individual.

Today I am currently a first-year undergraduate student at the University of California, Davis. A different atmosphere from the high school scene is just what I needed to expand my knowledge in what I want to pursue. After attending my first quarter at Davis, I realize that changing your major while in college is a natural thing because I have switched my major from Biochemistry to Music. I am unsure about what I plan to do with the Music major; possibly becoming a full-time and individual performer, getting involved in the music industry, or perhaps using my degree to teach as an instructor of music which would most likely be as a choral director.

I would like to give special appreciation and thanks to the National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 782, for being the only recipient to receive the Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship. After receiving word that I was the lone recipient from my region, and being the only student ever to receive the scholarship along with seven others, I am very proud to represent this scholarship. This scholarship amount has definitely helped me pay off a good portion of my tuition, and I am forever grateful. I promise to give all my effort in pursuing my dreams. Once again, thank you to the N.A.L.C., and good luck to this year's applicants of the Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship.

*Timothy Mascarinas
University of California, Davis*



Versatile performer

Lauren Holderman did everything BHS needed — and then some

by Zach Ewing
Bakersfield Californian staff writer

You might not have noticed, but Bakersfield High volleyball had a new sheriff in charge this year.

Gone to the University of Florida is Cassandra Anderson, the 6-foot-1 outside hitter with a powerful swing that resulted in more than 500 kills and a trip to the Central Section finals.

In her place is unassuming Lauren Holdennan, just 5-foot 6 and more of a Ferrari than a monster truck when it comes to attacking. But, as it turns out, just as effective.. Holderman, like Anderson last year, is *The Californian's* Volleyball Player of the Year.

"Everybody saw when Cassandra was pounding balls to the floor," Bakersfield coach Tom Clarke said. "But I've always known what I had with Lauren. She slipped through the cracks a little bit, but she really got the job done."

Holderman averaged 3.7 kills a game and punctuated her season with an 19-kill performance in a Division I Central Section semifinals loss at Clovis West without being blocked once.

"She played middle blocker as a 5-foot-6 kid," Clarke said.

"That's unheard of. There's no one who ever played middle at 5-6 and was effective."

But that was just part of Holderman's game. She served 83 aces and had 4.2 digs a game. She's versatile enough that when she plays at Cal State Bakersfield next year, she'll specialize in defense as a libero.

For the record, that'll be her third position.

"I started playing in fifth grade as an outside hitter," Holderman said. "At first, it hurt my arms, but I eventually just kind of sucked it up and got used to it. So at first I was an outside and then a middle at BHS, and in college I'll play defense."

Don't doubt that she can do it, Clarke said.

"There's only two people in town that I would consider elite passers, and she's one of them," said Clarke, who added that Liberty's Mariah Alvidrez was the other. "She's going to make a phenomenal college libero. Her speed and court vision, she sees everything going on."

And that proved to be a blessing for the young Drillers, who needed all the help they could get from that seemingly anonymous girl in the corner.

"We had to learn how each other played," Holderman said. "We definitely had growing pains, but it turned into something really good."

And there's no one besides Holderman that Clarke wanted leading that movement.

"I could go on and on talking about her," Clarke said. "I made a little speech about her at our awards night, and I simply just said that this is one of those kids that somewhere down the road, she's going to do something where we all go, 'Man, I knew her as a kid.' And I really believe that."

Article courtesy of the December 27, 2008 *Bakersfield Californian*



2008 All Area Volleyball Player of the Year

UNIONISM 101

Danny Mendez, North Branch
"City of Palms Branch" 2072

I've never studied the history of unions. But I know that the rules for our Union—especially the ones for local Branches—were established for the benefit and protection of its members.

We are also fortunate to have twenty to thirty NALC activists, who regularly attend union meetings, and support the Branch in many ways; they include Branch officers, Shop Stewards, and general members. But, as I've said before, the supreme authority of the Branch is the membership. Hopefully, a reminder of how our Branch works will be helpful to some of you.

Some of the protections inherent in our branch are Trustees and the By-Law Committee. Trustees are elected and review all financial receipts to ensure Branch funds are spent appropriate-

ly. The appointed By-Law Committee reviews all by-law proposals, and either recommends approval or disapproval of those proposals. Then, the by-laws proposals are published and voted upon at the appropriate meeting.

Our Branch officers manage the affairs of the Branch and are very important to our Branch. Our Shop Stewards are the work horses of our branch. They provide representation, police the contract, and provide many other valuable services for our members. General members who attend meetings regularly, play a very important part in our Branch: They are NALC activists who help the Branch succeed in all Branch functions. And, of course, the Branch President is the leader of us all. But, thanks to the talent we have in our Branch, no one person is indispensable or irreplaceable, and this is as it should be.

As the supreme authority, all Branch members may make motions and present by-law changes for anything they want. Individually, all members have one vote. Only through a majority of the vote will a motion or by-law pass. Motions do not require advance notice. By-law changes *do* require advance notice; but, in both instances members must be present at Branch meetings to vote.

Some time ago (many years), the membership voted to establish an entertainment fund to sponsor events to bring the membership together. For as long as I can remember, we've had two events: the annual Christmas party, and another event (some of you may remember the Carrier Roundups, or the picnics we used to have). Lately, the second event has been a sporting event. Any member objecting to this practice would be well within their right to bring it up for discussion at a Branch meeting.



At a recent Branch 782 meeting, Retiree Bill Marchand shows off a plaque with the chewed-up shoe that a pit bull terrier tore off his foot. This award was made by Gene Shebley prior to Bill's retirement a few years ago.

As a member, with one vote, I think Branch funds are well spent. They bring together Carriers in common purpose and promote unity. Without bringing the Branch membership together, our Officers could not accomplish the many activities expected by the NALC (COLCPE, MDA, CARRIER CORPS, E-ACTIVISTS, FOOD DRIVE, and on and on).

Throughout the years, good Union people have come and gone in our Branch. Always, other good NALC people have been willing to step up. As a result, our membership has had the best representation.

Our Branch is a not-for-profit organization, so there is little money in being a Union activist. There are some perks and a certain amount of prestige; but, generally Branch representatives get paid a token amount for all the work they do. The true reward is standing up for what is right, and leaving the world a little better for future workers. Some of those future workers might just be our sons and daughters...

If, any of you have any concerns, have heard rumors of waste by the Branch or wish to bring something up for a vote, come to a Branch meeting. All of us will never agree on everything, but it is only through open and honest discussion that we can hope to stay united in the things that bring us together. Stay informed! Come to meetings—and together with your brothers and sisters—vote for what is best for the Branch. When all is said and done, let's remember: We Are All on the Same Side!!

Article courtesy of the January 2009
Fort Myers, Florida Branch 2072
Southwest Florida News & Views



Mark Ramirez exhibiting some of the grace and speed he was known for when he was still delivering mail.

Union Meeting Raffle this month is \$400!! You have to be present...

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY
14 2009**

POST OFFICE HOLIDAY DINNER

Presented by Social
and Rec. Committee

MARRIOTT

(801 Truxtun Avenue)

**6-7 pm Social
7-9 pm Dinner
9-? Dance**

For Information & Tickets
Stella De Avila 392-6301
Emma Gonzalez 392-6197
Kathy Chavez TOUR 2

**\$1500 In Prizes
Raffles**

Professional Photography

Live Band

Semi-Formal Attire

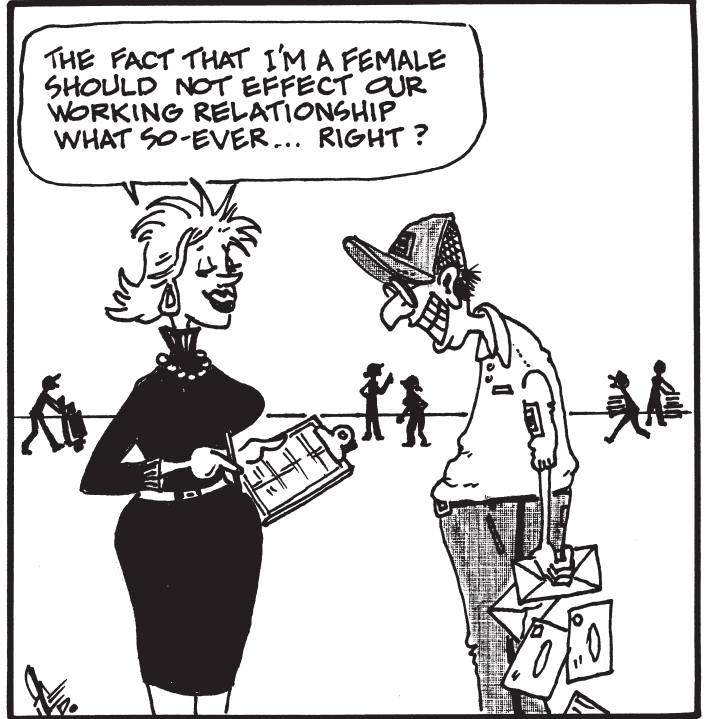
Adults Only

No-Host Bar



"OUT THERE" US—AND OUR SUPERVISORS...

OUT THERE



OUT THERE



OUT THERE

...AND, AS
BAKERSFIELD
RT. 420'S
RAMON
HERRERA
SAYS:
"ONLY IN
AMERICA!"



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



IN FRED ACEDO'S WORLD, WE'RE ALL STARS... IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A CARTOON: LET FRED PERCOLATE IT????!!!

SCUTTLEBUTT

DOUG ARNOLD, EDITOR
NALC Branch 245

refusing to accept wage concessions.

We all know that as soon as the auto companies return to profitability, the CEO's will get a fat bonus check—and the UAW will get pink slips and demands for more wage concessions and benefit cuts.

I've said before, I'm no Warren Buffet, so this rant is just my 42 cents. I do recall writing an article around September 2006 after returning from the National Convention in Las Vegas detailing how the TSP board thought it was a bad idea to invest the TSP funds into an 'R' or real estate trust fund. (At the time those 'R' funds were making incredible gains.) I think we see now how well those gains held up. I like to make money, but I don't find greed a positive trait. If we all wanted to be millionaires, we wouldn't be hauling mail now would we?

Apparently the PMG has found a way to be a millionaire.

As you try to suck it up and take one for the team to keep this company afloat, sleep well knowing that those at the top are feeling the pinch also.

For example, PMG John E. Potter has his salary limited to \$263,575 in fiscal year 2008. If you count four of his subordinates salaries (Walker, Donahoe, Vegliante and Gibbons) the five of them earn a combined base salary of \$1,168,191.

However, that isn't the whole story. Since their salaries are limited to a maximum amount, they can't get a bonus.

Well, they can't get a bonus while they're still an employee of the USPS...

The Postal Service calculates out what their bonus *SHOULD* be if they could get one. Then, they bank that bonus and pay 5% interest (try getting that on *your* bank account!). The USPS compounds these bonuses and then—*AFTER* they leave the employment of the USPS—they are no longer an employee, and their salary is no longer limited. The USPS then makes **ten** annual installments of the banked bonus.

Now we throw in the benefit package which includes: financial planning services, non-cash awards, parking, physical exams, free life insurance, airline clubs, spousal travel and—in the case of the PMG: \$2,558,316 for security costs—the total for the PMG compensation for 2008: \$857,459. His accrued

annual leave balance alone approaches a quarter of a million dollars. The five top executives I mentioned earlier have a combined total compensation of \$2,558,316. Not too shabby for a company that's losing BILLIONS!

I know the argument that we always hear. You have to pay that much to get someone comparable to private industry. *Really??* Is there a big demand for CEO's that lose billions??? I guess maybe there might be in the auto industry or the banking industry.

Speaking of the auto industry... the last two 'American' made cars I owned were assembled in Mexico and Canada. One of them had an engine built in Brazil. Did the CEO's of Chrysler, GM and Ford go to the Mexican, Canadian or Brazilian governments and ask for a bailout? Honda, Toyota and Nissan all assemble vehicles in the United States. Did they ask the U.S. government for a bailout?

We've seen what happens when the government bailed out the financial industry. The same clowns that destroyed their companies get bonuses at the taxpayers' expense. Somebody tell me that they didn't see that coming and I have a bridge (in Alaska) I'll sell ya. I expect that the same thing will happen if they bailout the auto industry. That's why I take issue with the blame (in the newspapers) currently going to the UAW for

Article courtesy of the Rockford, IL
Branch 245 Newsletter
published in January 2009



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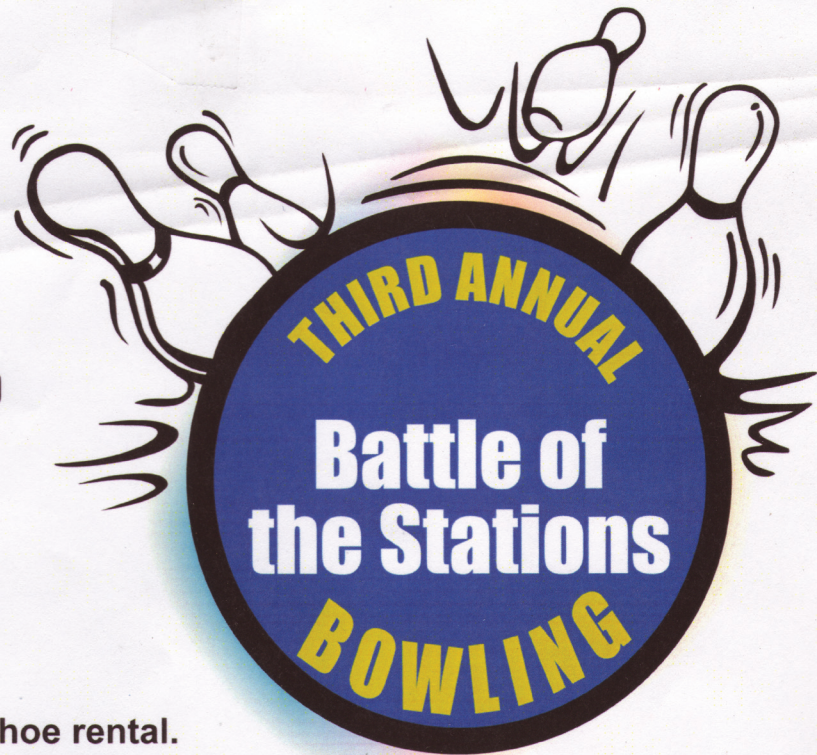
January 25th, 2009

Sunday • 12-3 pm
(Check-in 11:30 am)

Cost:

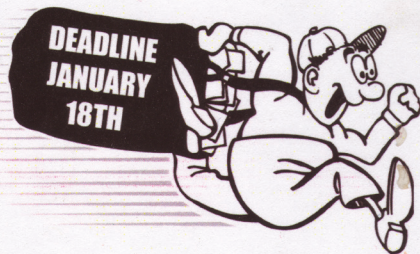
\$80.00 per team

(\$20.00 per person)
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Get your shoes, get your back stretched and your competitiveness spirit ready. Join our third annual Bowling extravaganza. Team up with your co-workers at your station and get a shot at having bragging rights on what station truly has the best carriers. Remember to pick a name for your team! You will need a 4-person team. (men, women, mixed)

Dealine: January 18. I will need teams who want to participate on sending the money, check, M.O. and the names of each player to me by this date to reserve the lanes. I only have so many lanes reserved. First to pay first to play.



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Your Official Personnel Folder

Who are you and what have you done for me lately? For most letter carriers, those questions could take days to answer. Aside from the normal duties of delivering the mail, there was the older gentleman who needed a spare hand while he took down a string of Christmas lights, the mother on the second floor who handed you the baby while she struggled to open her door, and the burial services you officiated over when the kids on the corner were putting their deceased pet goldfish to rest. As cold as it may sound, for the Postal Service, absent all the stories, clock rings and experiences battling the elements, the story of who you are and what you've done lately is documented in your Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

For those who may not know, the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)* describes your OPF this way:

349.1 The Official Personnel Folder (OPF) documents the employment history of individuals employed by the federal government. The records included in the OPF protect the legal and financial rights of the government and the employee. An OPF is established and maintained for each Postal Service employee, regardless of appointment type or duration.

With that definition in mind, your employment history—the “who are you?”—is documented in your OPF. But that is not all—*ELM* 349.2 details the contents of your OPF:

The OPF contains personnel records that reflect the employee's official status, benefits, and service and includes other documents that are significant in the employee's Postal Service career. When an employee has former postal or federal civilian service, the OPF for that service must be merged into a single OPF.

These benefits might include your decisions concerning who is covered by your health insurance and your life insurance beneficiaries. Your OPF also contains any letters of commendation and awards you may have received in your career. Additionally, any discipline you have received within the last two years is documented in your OPF. Remember, stale discipline may be removed from your OPF upon request—discipline becomes stale when it is two calendar years old.

In 2007, the Postal Service notified the NALC of plans to convert the hard copy OPFs into an electronic format that

would be available online—many of you will remember going into the personnel office to physically examine your OPF in years past. The Postal Service also stated that, when an OPF was scanned and converted into an electronic format, the new electronic version would become the “official” version of the OPF. This language can be found in the *ELM*:

349.3 The official record of a document in an OPF is the hard copy until the document is scanned and accepted into the Postal Service's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) system. At that point, the scanned image contained in the eOPF system is the official record of the document, and the hard copy ceases to be the official record.

In the fall of 2008, the Postal Service informed the NALC that the conversion of all hard copy OPFs to electronic OPFs (eOPF) was complete. In addition, NALC was notified the hard copy versions of the OPFs would be destroyed starting at the end of 2009.

With this notice—the destruction of the hard copy OPF—it is imperative that you review your eOPF to make sure it was accurately and completely scanned and that nothing was omitted when the conversion took place. In order to review your eOPF, you have some options: You can access it online or, if you don't have Internet access, you can request a printed hard copy.

If you have Internet access, you simply log on to <https://liteblue.usps.gov> and enter your Employee Identification Number (EIN) and PIN—this will direct you to the LiteBlue home page. On the right-hand side of the home page, you will find a link labeled for “go to eOPF,” and you will again be prompted to enter your EIN and PIN. You will then be able to view each document in your eOPF individually, starting with the newest. You can print or save any or all of these pages from your web browser.

If you do not have access to the Internet to review your eOPF, you may make a written request to your local postmaster.

Upon review of your eOPF, if you believe your file is inaccurate or missing documents, contact your shop steward or National Business Agent immediately to request assistance in correcting any discrepancies. ☒



Branch Officers

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

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

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

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OUT THERE



Look for the date that Fred Acedo drew this cartoon.

As a hint, look in the bottom right hand corner.

If Fred—who was *just* a Carrier—could see what was coming, why is it only *now* that the top USPS officials have gone into a crisis mode and have begun to even consider slashing Area and District *management* jobs to save the Postal Service???????