

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 2

WEB VERSION

FEBRUARY 2018

Grievance Process

Informal Step A (or pre-step A) - Grievant & shop steward meet with immediate supervisor within 14 days of the incident

Formal Step A - The Union President or designee meet with the Postmaster or designee within 7 days of the Step A appeal unless the time limits are extended by mutual consent. The PS Form 8190 must be completed the day of the Formal Step A meeting unless time limits are extended by mutual consent. If no resolution is reached, the appeal must be sent to Step B within 7 days of the completion of the PS Form 8190

Step B - The Dispute Resolution Team (DRT) -one union advocate & one management advocate- then has a goal of 14 days after receiving the PS Form 8190 & grievance file to resolve it. If no resolution is reached, the grievance is "impassed" & the National Business Agent has 14 days to appeal the grievance to arbitration

Pre-Arb - In most circumstances, an effort is made to resolve the dispute before going in front of an arbitrator.

Arbitration - The NBA or designee meet with a District designee in front of an arbitrator who renders a decision that is "final & binding"

Summaries - Once grievances are resolved, they are summarized into 25 words or less

ALERT!!! ALERT!!!

The Union has 14 days to file your grievance from the day a violation occurs. Please do not wait until the 13th or 14th day to notify us.

This basic information courtesy of the Rockford, Illinois January 2018 NALC Branch 245 John H. Swanson Merged Branch 245 Newsletter. A big "Thank You!!!" to Editor Lawrence Steward II. It's important that you have some idea of the protections and responsibilities that YOU have!!!

Minutes of the January 2018 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 January, 2018 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, Frank Martinez. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Webmaster, Rick Plummer; Photographer, Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurers, Debbie Guillet and Lucinda Martinez; Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer and Paul Greenfield and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the December 20, 2016 meeting were read by Asst. Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer and accepted with no additions or corrections. The communications were read by Recording Secretary, Kim Gerdes.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES: Basil Zuniga reported that next month will be Downtown Stations turn to fold the newsletter. He thanked Kim Gerdes for bringing Chinese food this month. He encouraged anyone who has not come to a newsletter folding to attend. It is not much work and lots of fun. He then discussed articles in the newsletter. It was a small newsletter and everyone should check it out. He feels that when someone leaves whether it is retirement or passing, it should be documented. He reported that Phil Krause passed away recently. Paul Greenfield reported that there have been problems with the Social and Recreation Committee, there has been a management turn over and the bank account was allowed to "lapse". Frank Martinez was able to get the account reinstated. He stated that he took the ELM to management as a "receipt" on how to get things done right. It is management's responsibility to see that the committee is run properly. The Social and Recreation Committee will donate \$500. to the bowling tournament. They are also trying to get Costco cookies for Valentines Day. John Ortega commended Paul Greenfield to taking the time to print the sections of the ELM and taking it to management. Kim Gerdes reported that

"OuT tHeRe"



2 books were sold, there are 627 remaining. Shari Sharp reported that the Food Drive is May 12. She is working with the Commercial Food Workers union on getting bags. She has also contacted KGET Channel 17 for a PSA. She will follow up tomorrow. Mark Ramirez reported that there was a

slight increase in NALC/HBP premiums. It is less expensive to sign up for Self and Family rather than Self plus One. If you signed up for Self plus One National will send a letter and allow you to go back to Self and Family. He discussed the plan options and reminded members that the NALC Plan is member owned and has been very consistent through out the years.

OLD BUSINESS: John Ortega reported that the By-Laws Committee will meet in the conference room following the meeting.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery requested a moment of silence for member Phil Krause.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that a member called regarding the USPS Life Insurance,

her premium had increased. He reminded members that it is Term Insurance through the Postal Service, not the union. Also, after reaching age 60 it will increase every 5

"OuT tHeRe"



years. He also informed members that Lucinda Martinez will be the Assistant Financial Secretary.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$20,864.28 was collected for the month of January.

TREASURERS REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$74,399.27
Dues and Income	\$13,236.04
Total Balance	\$88,035.11
Total Expenses	\$18,932.11
Ending Balance	\$69,053.20

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Hermie Encinas. Next month the tickets for the 50/50 drawing will be \$1 each or 7 for \$5.

The Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Janice Valdez if she had been present.

There were 46 members present. Three guests.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES

Non-Members February 2018*

**CCA names are in italics*

Downtown Station
Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz

South Station
100% UNION!!!

Brundage/East Bakersfield
100% UNION!!!

Hillcrest
100% UNION!!!

Dole Court
100% UNION!!!

Stockdale
James Oh
Marty Martinez
Daniel Zuniga

Camino Media
100% UNION!!!

Arvin
100% UNION!!!

Avenal
100% UNION!!!

California City
100% UNION!!!

Delano
Cynthia V. Quebral
Daniela Barreto

Lamont
100% UNION!!!

Edwards AFB
Varline Reeder

Mojave
Alexander Keller

Ridgecrest
100% UNION!!!

Shafter
M. D. Voights
L. M. New

Taft
K. J. Kaczmarek

Tehachapi
B. C. Den Beeman

Trona
100% UNION!!!

Wasco
100% UNION!!!

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



By-Laws Committee Report

Proposed NALC Branch 782 By-Law Change Article X Section 10

On January 24, 2018, a By-Laws Committee meeting was held regarding a proposal changing the formula for the monthly membership meeting drawing. The meeting was chaired by Branch 782 Vice President John Ortega and the committee consisted of Mark Ramirez, Mike Meza, Paul Salazar and Teresa Ortega.

Article X Section 10:

CURRENT LANGUAGE

A drawing using the current membership roster provided by the Financial Secretary will be conducted at the regular meeting of the Branch with the beginning amount of fifty dollars. If the member whose name is drawn is not present at the meeting, the amount will increase fifty dollars each successive month until it reaches five hundred dollars and will remain at five hundred dollars until there is a member present whose name is drawn. Once there is a winner, the amount of the drawing will start again at fifty dollars. Members must be present to win unless their absence is due to attendance at the State or National Conventions.

PROPOSED NEW LANGUAGE

A drawing for *five hundred dollars*, using the current membership roster provided by the Financial Secretary, will be conducted at the regular monthly Branch meeting. Members must be present to win unless their absence is due to attendance at the State or National Conventions.

The By-laws Committee's recommendation will be read at the February 28, 2018 general membership meeting and then will be voted upon by the membership in attendance. Come to the meeting and have your voice heard.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN ORTEGA
NALC Branch 782 Vice President

Something to consider...

by Steven Abasta,
Executive Vice President NALC Branch 24

An individual who works off the clock may be under the mistaken belief that nobody is harmed when this is done.

If you are not receiving proper credit for all work you are performing then you are not only shortchanging yourself, but every other Letter Carrier in that office.

Routes are adjusted based on the workload of the individual route. If you give Management one half hour each day, that comes out to two and one half hours that is not credited to your route each week. Route evaluations and adjustments are based on a number of items, and one of the key factors is volume of mail and time allowance for the volume.

All Letter Carrier routes are to be adjusted to as close to eight hours as possible.

If, over a period of time, you are only allowing yourself credit for seven and a half hours per day, your route will most likely evaluate as less than eight hours. Management will then have the opportunity to either revert that assignment once it becomes vacant or to abolish it while you are still on the route.

Using the equation I refer to above, if three Carriers in your station work off the clock for 30 minutes per day, five days per week, Management will be able to take an entire route out of your station based on the number of hours utilized to cover all of the assignments.

If you decide to show up at work 30 minutes early and case mail, sort your parcels or load the circulars in your vehicle before you clock on, you have reduced the time that you can show that you need to complete your work.

Besides, why work for free when you can work and get paid for it?

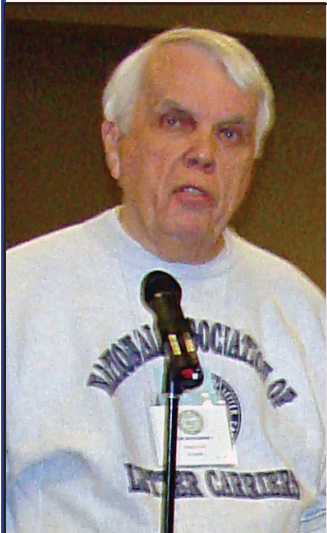
A portion of an article originally published by NALC Branch 24 in the January/February 2018 Los Angeles, CA Angel City Carrier.



Preparing for the end

"I want to talk to you about something you don't want to hear: your death," **Jim Edgemon** said.

That's how Edgemon, a retired member of Eugene, OR Branch 916 and former national director of city delivery, began an Oregon State Association convention seminar in April on preparing for death.



Jim Edgemon

will go a long way toward making the inevitable event of your departure from this life easier for everyone, he said.

"I think people owe their families some decisions made before the time comes that they have to be made," he

said. "Most people delay any discussions on their own burial plans because it's not comfortable to do so."

Decisions on details such as burial or cremation, where to be interred or what kind of memorial service to have shouldn't be left to family members who may not know your preferences and may even argue over them, Edgemon said.

"In the past two years, I've been aware of three families who were torn apart after the death of a loved one because the deceased never discussed with them what would happen after their death," he said. "It's my strong suggestion that you write down how you want your death handled...and make sure your family is aware of your views."

Other details to consider include possible organ donation (see sidebar); whether to have a funeral with a casket or remains or simply a memorial service; the location city of the service; whether to have a ceremony in a church, synagogue or other religious setting, a funeral home or elsewhere; what, if any, religious rituals will be involved; and where to publish death notices and what they should say.

These details may sound simple, but life is complicated and sometimes death is as well. Here are some items to think about.

Death notices

Friends and co-workers may learn of a death only through a death notice published in a newspaper. Many people have lived in more than one area and may want to publish death notices in multiple cities or towns.

"What kind of newspaper ads are you going to have covering your death?" Edgemon asked. "Some people say, 'Well, I've lived in three or four different places, so I want each place to have notification.' Well, that's OK, but that's going to be pretty expensive."

Edgemon recalled a recent dispute within a family of a deceased acquaintance: "You cannot imagine the fight that occurred over someone's obituary." Some members of the family wanted religious views and activities mentioned but others did not.

"It tore the family up deciding how the obituary was going to be worded," he said. The deceased person could have settled the matter by talking about it with family beforehand.

Some experts suggest delegating various roles to the family members who are best suited to handle them. For instance, one person could deal with financial matters, another with spiritual or religious issues.

What to do when a letter carrier *Dies*

Living wills

Another matter that many don't talk about, but would benefit from planning, relates to end-of-life considerations. Some people who are near the end of their life want medical intervention to extend it as long as possible; others prefer not to be resuscitated or kept alive with artificial means. Writing a "living will," also known as an advanced directive or directive to physicians, is a good way to share your preferences with your family and doctor if you are no longer able to speak for yourself. If you want to donate your organs after death, you also will need written authorization.

"At minimum, you should lay out a plan," Edgemon said, "so your family isn't left in the dark."

Some people hire an attorney to help them draft a living will; others do it on their own. Living wills often are crafted along with other documents such as wills or trusts. Another important document to consider is a power of attorney, which gives someone else you choose the legal ability to make decisions for you if you become incapacitated—including, if you specify, decisions not covered in your living will.

Funeral expenses

The most pressing financial need in the days after your death, Edgemon said, is leaving enough available cash to handle funeral expenses and other immediate concerns. A family cannot depend only on life insurance to cover those costs because insurance claims may take several weeks to be settled. Edgemon recalled the death of his father in 1959, when his mother had to take out a bank loan just to pay for

*W*hether you are an active or retired letter carrier, there are several details to take care of with the federal government to assure that the benefits that are due to your surviving spouse, children or other family members go to them as soon as possible.

When a federal retiree or survivor annuitant dies, survivors, family or estate representatives are required to notify the federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM handles pension benefits for retired federal and postal employees and their families. If a federal or postal retiree dies, recurring monthly payments may be made to the surviving spouse if the retiree elected a reduced annuity to provide the benefit.

If the postal employee had a Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI) policy, OPM will handle the benefits as well.

There is an easy way for the survivors of deceased NALC retired members to report the death to OPM. They can simply call the NALC Retirement Department and it will report the death to OPM on their behalf.

You can reach the department at NALC toll-free at 800-424-5186, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time, or at 202-393-4695 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Of course, anyone can report the death of an annuitant themselves on OPM's website, or by calling, writing or e-mailing OPM. But if NALC has already taken care of it, there is no need to notify OPM again.

Once the death of an annuitant is reported, OPM's Retirement Operations Center sends an application for death benefits to the applicable survivors. It can take six to eight weeks for forms to arrive by mail.

Application forms from OPM come with a claim number and pre-addressed return envelopes, which are color-coded. Using the forms and envelopes provided by OPM helps keep things efficient.

OPM will mail the appropriate application for death benefits and, if the deceased carrier had a FEGLI policy, a claim form.

Surviving spouses entitled to a survivor annuity should not expect that income for the next two to three months. Payment will include retroactive pay.

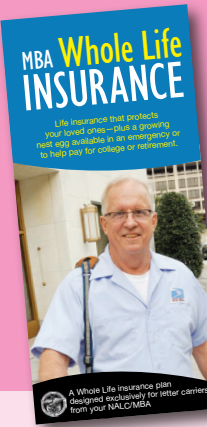
Any annuity payments already received for the month in which the death occurred will be retrieved by OPM. The payment for the month of death is retrieved in its entirety; it will later be prorated for the number of days the annuitant was living and paid to the beneficiary. Often, the spouse who is receiving a survivor annuity is the beneficiary, in which case payment will accompany the first survivor annuity payment.

If the deceased is an active letter carrier, a family member should notify their supervisor and postmaster and ask for the relevant forms to fill out to claim any benefits, along with other tasks.

NALC provides all of its members in good standing with an accidental death benefit through the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA). Contact the MBA at 800-424-5184, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time to learn about this benefit. A letter carrier also may have purchased other life insurance or financial products from MBA.

For more information and checklists about what to do, see the NALC brochures, "When a retired letter carrier dies..." or "When an active letter carrier dies..." These brochures are available for download from nalc.org under "Workplace issues>Retirement" or from the NALC Supply Department at Headquarters; to request a brochure, call 202-393-4695. **PR**

Continued on next page...



Life insurance is an important part of estate planning. The Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) offers several insurance policies to NALC members. The MBA is a not-for-profit organization, created and administered by NALC, so insurance plans offered by the MBA are designed to give NALC members and their families the best possible protection for the lowest cost.

MBA has recently revised the life insurance products offered to NALC members and their families. For more information on the changes, and on which plan may be right for you, see Director of Life Insurance Myra Warren's column on page 31 or visit nalc.org/mba.

This excellently written article was originally published in the September 2017 issue of the *NALC Postal Record*.

Thank you, Jim Edgemon!!

Also, a big "Thank You" to Mike Shea from the *Postal Record*!! I appreciate your help!!

Basil Zuniga, NALC Branch 782 Editor-guy

funeral expenses because the family had no cash immediately available.

"Most people have life insurance policies," Edgemon said. "But there's usually a delay of three to four weeks for payment. It's a good reason to plan in advance and obtain the necessary funding."

Many funeral homes offer prepayment plans that allow you to identify your preferences and pay for them before your death. This gives you a chance to make choices about your funeral, leaving your loved ones without the burden of payment, and also to lock in current prices. Life insurance policies also may offer supplemental burial insurance that pays a small amount immediately after your death either to your family or directly to a funeral home of your choosing to cover expenses. At a minimum, you should consider saving some cash to pay for these expenses.

Wills

Everyone should have a will to direct how their property is distributed after they die. Passing away without having a will in place can cause family turmoil and delay the distribution of your property by throwing the decisions into a courtroom. In addition to bequeathing your assets directly to family members, be sure to specify who

should receive personal property you don't want sold off, and consider other ways of giving your money to loved ones, such as toward college savings funds. If you want to give money to charities or other organizations, either specify them or let your loved ones know what types of charities to pick.

But there is more to consider than the contents of your will. An executor of the will—the person who will have the power to oversee the distribution of your property—should be specified. It could be a family member, a friend or an attorney. Creating a trust in addition to crafting a will may make it quicker and easier for loved ones to receive your property and avoid legal or tax problems. A trust allows someone else (a trustee, or more than one trustee) to handle your money on your behalf. There are several kinds of trusts, so if you create one, be sure it meets your needs.

None of these documents is of any use, though, if they can't be located. Be sure to either give copies to loved ones or tell them where they can be located when the time comes, along with other financial and medical records, including information on how to obtain survivor benefits from the federal government for a letter carrier's service (see sidebar, page 13).

"The documents ought to be somewhere where your family can find them immediately," Edgemon said.

In addition to wills, trusts and the like, consider putting other vital documents in the file, such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, adoption papers, asset and debt records, military records or insurance policies.

Your virtual remains

Don't forget another legacy people leave behind in the modern world—their internet presence. Someone will need your account names and passwords for social media and financial accounts to make announcements or to close the accounts. The internet can also help you organize all these tasks and records; for instance, Everplans (everplans.com) is one online tool that, for a fee, allows you to store documents in one place.

Edgemon urged letter carriers to face these uncomfortable issues for the benefit of their loved ones: "If you care about your family, then you make it far easier for them when you pass away than if you do nothing and just allow things to happen."

Experts recommend that everyone plan end-of-life wishes and their estates early and review them often. Take another look at your plans whenever you experience a major life event, such as a marriage, divorce or birth of a child. Changes in laws or tax code; the death or illness of someone you've named as an executor or beneficiary and other similar events also might trigger changes to your plans. Of course, a serious medical diagnosis, especially one that could bring cognitive impairment, is an urgent reason to assure that your plans are in order.

"Estate planning and preparing for your own departure are smart ways to assure that your inevitable death does not result in unnecessary problems for your loved ones," NALC Director of Retirees Ron Watson said. "Taking a little time to think about the future can bring comfort to your loved ones." PR





In Memorium

Benjamin "Bennie" Aguilar

Benjamin Aguilar was born in Bakersfield California on September 26, 1930 to Benjamin and Petra Aguilar. He passed away on February 4, 2018.

Benjamin was raised in Bakersfield and attended East Bakersfield High School. He graduated in 1948 and in 1949 he joined the United States Army and served in the Korean Conflict as a medic until 1951.

After holding various jobs following his military service, he began his long career with the U. S Postal Service. He worked as a Letter Carrier for 40 years. While working for Hillcrest Post Office, Benjamin met his wife, Kathie, and they were married on May 13, 1978.

Benjamin was preceded in death by his parents, numerous aunts, his brothers Henry and Ray and his daughter Cathy Lara.

He is survived by his wife Kathie, his children Mhyrianna Root, Ann Keats, Renee Aguilar, Steven Aguilar, Anna Brown, Sophie Williams and Paul Aguilar, his 20 grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers we request that you have a Mass in his honor at any of the Catholic churches. At his request there will be no formal service.

Published in *Bakersfield Californian* on February 7, 2018

Bennie retired in 1996 after some forty years of carrying mail...

Think about what that opening statement is saying.

There are active duty Letter Carriers who receive this newsletter who were born after Bennie retired. And, even though you may not have known him, he would have been well aware of the things that you go through as you deliver to the various neighborhoods in which mail is dispatched today.

As could be expected, there are many memories that many of the "old timers" can share about "Bennie".

One of the consistent things that comes up when talking with them is that "Bennie was ALWAYS dressed professionally with highly polished shoes and his uniform was always perfect and he gave his customers the best possible service." That may have had something to do with his military service. On the other hand, it was just the way that Bennie did what he had to do to do the best possible job he'd been tasked with.

Branch 782 S.A.N.E. Fred Acedo worked at the Hillcrest Office for many of the years that Benny was around. In fact, when Benny retired, Fred bid and won the opportunity to carry Route 616 — Benny's final assignment.

If you don't know Fred, he points out that he and Bennie had the same "body style". They looked alot alike.

When Fred was out delivering on his new assignment, he was surprised that the customers would wave at him as they were driving by and call out, "Hi, Bennie!" Apparently, Bennie never told his customers that he was retiring and — from a distance — they all assumed that Bennie was still out there taking care of business.

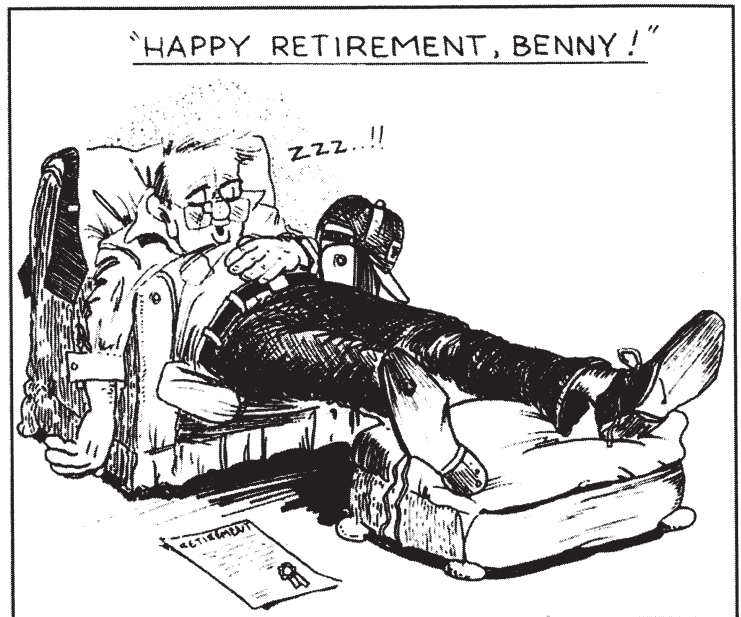
THIS LED TO AT LEAST ONE FUNNY THING...

Route 616 was, at that time, out by the Country Club and Fred found himself in need of a comfort stop. But, the only place where he felt that he could quickly relieve himself was in a empty field behind the Country club. Fred found a tree and did what men have done since the dawn of time.

He looked up to see a truck driving across the field with two women. They were taking an "off-road" short-cut . And, as they drove by, they both waved and Fred heard them laughing almost out-of-control as they called out shouting, "Hi, Bennie!"

At the end of the day, Fred telephoned Bennie at home to let him know what had happened. Bennie wasn't exactly pleased.

But, as Fred pointed out to him, "What'd you want me to do?"



This Fred Acedo **Out tHeRe** cartoon was published in the Branch 782 newsletter in 1996 — the month that Benny retired!

In Memorium

Phillip “Big Dude” Krause

Phillip Lee Krause was born on March 9, 1949 to Louis and Bonita “Bonnie” Krause in Huntington Park, California. He passed away in Bakersfield on January 17, 2018 at the age of 68.

At age 9, his family moved to Lamont, California. As a boy, he and his family enjoyed hunting and fishing. Phillip attended Arvin High School where he graduated with the Class of 1966.

In 1969, he joined the U.S. Army and his three year enlistment included assignment to the 101st Airborne following basic and advanced training. During an “in-country” tour (Vietnam), he was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service against hostile forces. After he returned to “The World” (the United States), he was stationed in Frederick, Maryland until his discharge in 1972.



It is always hard saying good-bye to an old friend.

I worked with Phil Krause for most of my postal career (my seniority date is 7/31/78) and I first met him as I was being trained by Andy Garcia at the Brundage Station.

As a “newbie” I had the pleasure of delivering to Big Dude’s home. And, I think that — at that time — I had been working for all of a week or so for the Post Office.

Big Dude gave me some words of encouragement and stated, “Believe me. It gets easier.” (*Believe me! Almost forty years later, I’m still waiting for it to get easier...*)

I was transferred to Stockdale Station in 1980 and worked with Phil until he retired. Big Dude was a Dodger fan. I remember the lively discussions Big Dude had with

S.F. Giant fans over Barry Bonds and his Hall of Fame numbers. He would *always* state that Bonds should have an asterick next to his name because of the P.E.D.S. *That* didn’t set well with the Giants fans!

Big Dude worked next to Paul Skinner for a big part of his career and you can imagine there was *ALWAYS* lively discussion between those two! Phil would affectionately call Paul “Skinnard”.

It was a pleasure knowing Big Dude. I found him to be an honorable man who was dedicated to his customers and who truly believed that Service was the most important aspect of our job!

Good bye, old friend, till we meet again.

RANDY COURSON
Stockdale Station Shop Steward

Phillip began his USPS career as a Letter Carrier in Bakersfield in 1973 and eventually wound up at the Stockdale Station. There, he became known as “Big Dude”.

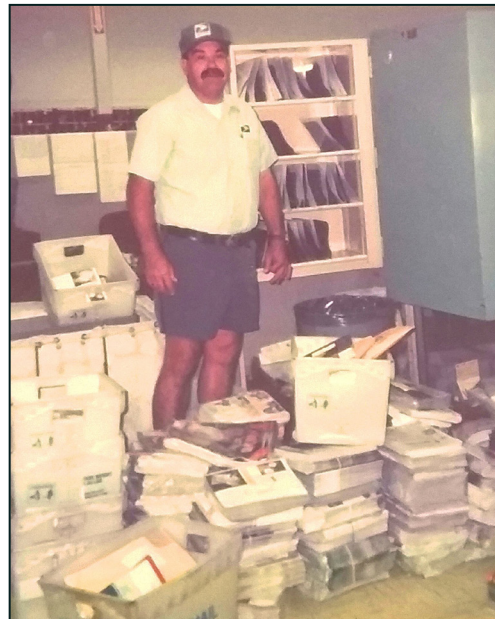
His hard work and dedication to giving good service to his customers was always rewarded around Christmas with lots of gifts and Christmas goodies. He retired in January 1, 2009 after thirty-six years on the job.

He was preceded in death by his parents, and numerous aunts and uncles.

Phillip married the love of his life, Donna Grant his wife of 43 years, in March 1974 and is survived by her and their two children, Brian (with wife Monique) and Dee; two granddaughters, Kylie and Madison; brother Louis; mother-in-law Joyce Grant; in-laws Rocky and Marsha Johnson, Shallie Carter and Lynn O. Grant; and many neices and nephews and their families.

At his request there was no formal service.

Information courtesy of the members of the Krause extended family



“Big Dude”, in this undated picture, is shown with what looks to be election mail in the 1980s/1990s.

When Fred Acedo heard that “Big Dude” had passed away, he sighed and shared this memory:

“It was in the early 70’s. I was having one of *THOSE* days. Mail was extremely heavy. I’d gotten out late and my supervisor knew that I was going to be getting back late. Super late. Way, Way Dark Late.

My wife, Toni, had brought me some lunch because she knew that I wouldn’t have time to stop for long. She was sitting with me when new PTF Phil showed up to help me.

He saw me sitting there with a pretty girl (who didn’t look like a wife) and sarcastically asked, “Why’d they think *you* needed help?” I then suggested where he could go. Really. I did. [Fred can be *very* poetic...]

He left. Came back later to help me finish. Apologized to me. And, I explained that the ‘pretty girl’ was my wife and that I had stopped for a quick five minute lunch.

We ‘kissed and made up’ and were okay.”

Gilbert Ochoa, age 70, was born May 27, 1947 and passed away in his home with his family by his side on February 6, 2018.



Gilbert attended East Bakersfield High School where he met his future wife of 50 years, Diane. After graduating, Gilbert was drafted and assigned to duty in Vietnam from 1969 - 1970 at Pleiku Air Base. He proudly served his country from 1968-1972. When he left for Vietnam, he left behind his wife and daughter, Michelle, who was only two weeks old. He next saw Michelle — when she was eight months old — during R&R in Hawaii when he was joined by his family. It was better than being crouched behind concertina wire!

He worked for the United States Postal Service as a Letter Carrier for 38 years before he retired in 2007.

Gilbert was a proud Daddy and Papa. He is survived by his wife Diane; daughters Michele Feola, Jennifer Ochoa and Noelle Ochoa; son-in-laws Chris Feola, Daniel Comerford, and Josh Hawkesworth; grandchildren Kailyn, Madison, Christopher and Kristyn Feola; Josephine and Luke Comerford; and Isla and Lily Hawkesworth. Gilbert was also survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Lou and Eva Ochoa and numerous brother and sister in laws that were not only family but were his close friends.

Gilbert's life revolved around his family, participating in Veteran activities such as the Kern County Honor Flight and watching his grandchildren swim.

A special thanks to Tina Roberson for helping make Gilbert's last days comfortable. The family would also like to extend a special thank you to David and Avis Olague, Carlos and Susan Ozuna,

and Bobby and Linda Aguilar; their generosity meant the world to Gilbert and Diane.

Funeral services were held February 20, 2018. There was a "Freedom Rider" motorcade which commenced at 9:45 am from Mission Family Mortuary. Services were at 10:45 am at the Bakersfield National Cemetery.

This information, published in Mission Family Mortuary's website on Feb. 16, 2018, was augmented by some additional items.

Kern County Honor Flight #17 May 29 - 31, 2015



Retired Branch 782 members Alex Dang and Gilbert waiting to depart from the Bakersfield airport.



Gilbert is welcomed upon the arrival in Washington, DC.

In May 2015, Gilbert was in the first ever all-Vietnam Veteran Kern County contingent to travel to our country's capitol.

Accompanied by his daughter and Honor Flight Guardian, Michelle, he considered the trip to be one of the highlights of his life. He was extremely honored and so very grateful to have been healthy enough to participate in this event!

When Gilbert was discharged from the Army, he worked for PG&E in the Bay Area. He missed being "home". Louis Ochoa, Gilbert's brother, worked at the Post Office and informed Gilbert that he could sign up to take the test to become a Letter Carrier. In time, Louis heard people referring to Gilbert as "Squeaky" and he often wondered where he'd gotten the name.

Well... John Wonderly was a Bakersfield Letter Carrier from 1967-1985 before he left "for greener pastures". He worked with Gilbert at Bakersfield's Hillcrest Station for many of those years.

Because of his hair, Gilbert used to call John, "Wooly Bully" and "Brillo". In response, John then gave Gilbert the nickname of "Squeaky" because of his distinctive laugh.



Gilbert and Michelle on the Veterans Day parade float in 2016.

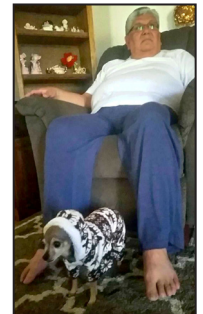
There are other things you may not have known about Gilbert.

He was extremely pleased to be able to be a part of many activities to honor military veterans! He met many tremendous individuals when he would go to the VA. Although he never spoke much about his Vietnam experience, he felt it was important to honor all Veterans for their service!

It is very evident that Gilbert is missed by his family and friends. Diane was his wife of fifty years and probably feels that she wasn't done raising him, yet.

It should also be noted that there is someone else who looks for him every single day.

Gilbert belonged to "Christy". She is a chihuahua who slept under his bed. She *always* wanted to be where he was. To this day, she still wanders around the house looking for him. It is sad and it is sweet.

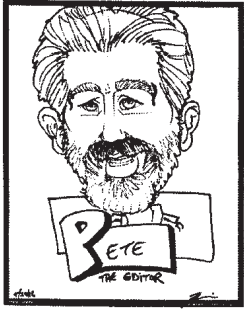


"Christy" with her Gilbert is dressed for any kind of cold weather they might encounter during their day.

Pancreatic cancer is such a vicious disease. It is generally not detected until it is in its late stages. Gilbert went through a lot toward the end of his life and he can now rest in peace.

In Memorium

Gilbert Ochoa



Knowledge Is Power! Please Do Not Forget It!

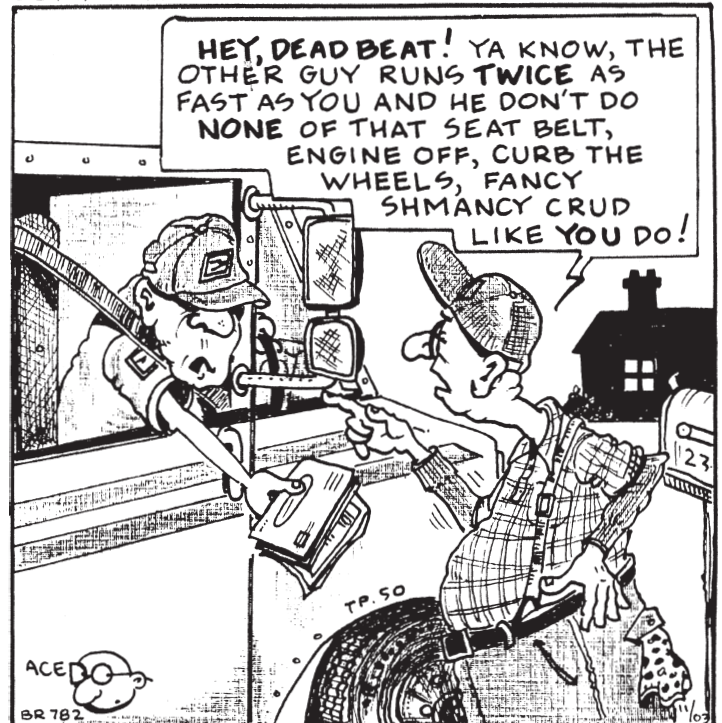
By Editor Pete Prunier

OK so you feel your supervisor is riding you to do more and more, and you are even thinking about quitting. What are you going to do about it? Well I was there once. 9 years after I started, I thought about going back to my trade in refrigeration. I hooked up with Yankee and we had a 30 year run in the union. There was more than that to the story though. You see I had to learn my job by the contract. This took a little work. I started reading, talking to senior carriers and attending every union function I could. After awhile I became a pain in managements a\$\$\$. You see because I knew my job, they could no longer fight me in my daily functions.

I was a "Marked Man", and management knew I knew my job. It did not matter what they tried to do to me, they knew they were going to have a fight on their hands. On the next page I am going to give you an example of this. You see because I left the office later than other letter carriers (Due to Union Business), they would always come and take my truck. They had a shortage of vehicles in the old days. What bothered me is that this always added time to my day. I came home and instead of griping about it, I sat down and wrote down all the delays I would incur if management took my truck. I made about 20 copies of the next page. It put me in a position to ask for 1 hour of additional time if they took my vehicle. Management was ripping! One day a supervisor even tried to

eliminate as many of the items off the sheet that he could. He came back and told me that he had gassed up my vehicle so he save me 11 minutes. I notified him that it was only 6 minutes.....because I had to re-inspect my vehicle again because someone else had used it! Now you know why they hated me, but they never got over on me! The truth is the truth. If you are fed up with being taken advantage of, start trying to attend union meetings and start reading the resources on the national web site. Talk to senior carriers and remember I am always around. Give me a call.....KNOWLEDGE IS POWER! P.S. Management stopped using my truck.

OUT THERE



Originally published February 2005

Yes, You Can Use My Vehicle...

Pete



Route 432

But Please Be Advised.....

1. I will remove my personal gear and put it in the new vehicle.....Add 6 min
2. I will re-inspect and readjust the mirrors for any vehicle.....Add 5 min
3. If new vehicle is out of gas or at half a tank I have to fill it
My route is over 20 miles long and needs gas every 3rd day.....Add 11 min
4. I will load and unload outside instead of in garage.....Add 6 min
5. I will restock the proper forms for new vehicle.....Add 4 min
6. I have a square base mail tray that holds 2 buckets under it, if you have given me a triangular base my routine changes.....Add 10 min
7. I put my DPS mail in the door well behind a square base, it holds 6 trays.
If you have given me a triangle base it holds only 4 trays. I get about 6 trays average (add 1 minute each tray for loading).....Add 2 min
8. I have a very fast street time partly because I am very familiar with my truck. With another vehicle the touch of the breaks, steering, and handling on the highway is different.I need to slow down to compensate. Add 10 min
9. I will remove my personal gear at the end of the day and secure it in my wall locker instead of leaving it in my truck.....Add 3 min
10. Please add in all time to redo scanner for set up and mileage of new truck.
Remember that mileage of my truck and truck ID are waiting.....Add 2 min
11. Intangibles include, seat that is higher or lower, windows that have hard locks or cranks, key locks that do not work just right, jump seat in vehicle, other gear left by regular in vehicle.....Add 3 min
12. I will have to find a supervisor to give me a spare, and locate the vehicle in the parking lot.....Add 5 min

Total.....67 Minutes

As you know I am a team player and I very much want to help you so please take my vehicle. Anyone of these items are certainly negotiable, and I will be willing to discuss them with you. But under the circumstances the 3996 is an estimate of time and at this time.....PLEASE ADD 1 HOUR TO MY ESTIMATED WORKDAY!

The information on pages 10 and 11 is courtesy of the February 2018 44 Magnum published by Manchester, NH Branch 44. Thanks, Pete!!!

So... You think it's cold in California's Central Valley???

Welcome to Michigan

By Ron Zalewski, Treasurer
NALC Branch 4374

What a month it's been! Record 12 consecutive days without breaking 20 degrees, then freezing rain, then almost 60 degrees on the Thursday following social night.

As I write this, it's Friday, and I drove to the office in the rain. Well, except the last five miles, which was snow pellets.

By the time today is over, we expect several inches of snow, and — by tomorrow — we'll be back in the deep freeze. Looks like another week of exceptionally cold weather coming up. Maybe by the time you read this, it will have warmed a bit (if the long-range weather guessers are right).

So, what does all this mean to us as Letter Carriers? It means that we must be ever vigilant regarding our safety. The hazards we face are slippery surfaces and cold temperatures.

Slip and fall accidents are the number one cause of Letter Carrier injury. One significant way to mitigate slip and fall danger is to avoid uncleared snow and ice.

There's nothing in the mail worth an injury.

When you find that a particular customer hasn't shoveled and salted, bring the mail back. We all use judgement on days when it's actively snowing, and perhaps accept a bit more risk because we understand that the customer can't really clear the snow until they get home from work, or they are waiting for their service to arrive.

Just remember that there's nothing in the mail worth the injury. Don't be hesitant to curtail if there is a hazard, even if the problem in something the customer couldn't have cleaned.

Here's an example: I have a delivery at a house that has nine concrete steps. Their hedges are trimmed such that the porch rails are inaccessible. If there's any snow at all — even if it is "today's snow" — I curtail the mail. The porch is too dangerous to risk if there is any sort of unsure footing.

Plus, should I happen to fall, the consequences could be catastrophic. Nine steps are basically a full floor and I'm pretty sure I couldn't walk away from a fall off of what is effectively a second story balcony!

The other danger is the cold.

I've written about frostbite and frostnip before. Keep your skin covered! Uncovered skin will freeze in merely minutes when the wind chill is as cold as it was last week. Remember that frostbite is a life-time injury because some of the changes caused by frostbite may be permanent. Frostnip is nothing more than the beginning of frostbite. Both conditions are medical emergencies.

They may require treatment at an emergency room. Clinics and doctors' offices are likely not equipped to deal with the injury.

Hypothermia is another hazard of the cold. Dressing in layers and staying dry are the best ways to avoid hypothermia. If you find yourself uncontrollably shivering, you are likely in the beginning stages. Stop what you're doing and return to a warm environment. Hot drinks will help raise your core temperature. Avoid alcohol, as it only feels warm — it will cause your temperature to fall, not rise.

One last consideration about the cold.

It's no coincidence that you see news reports of people having heart attacks during or after shoveling snow. The cold weather will cause physiological changes that cause your heart to work harder, and exertion magnifies the effect. The two issues, combined with existing (but not necessarily known) cardiovascular disease, have potential to cause an arterial blockage — a heart attack.

If you feel chest pain, even minor chest pain, after physical exertion in extreme cold, you need medical attention right away.

Talk to your doctor about what she/he would like you to do if you experience this pain, known as angina. (A few minutes spent at www.heart.org, the American Heart Association's website will help you prepare for the discussion with your doctor.)

A portion of an article originally published by NALC Branch 4374 in the January 2018 Center Line, Michigan *Front Lines*.



You can also ask Branch 44 member David Betts about the conditions he faces when he delivers mail in New Hampshire. For us in Central California, winter conditions may include shorts and flip-flops. Yup.

A big thank you for this picture to Branch 44 Editor Pete Prunier!!

Increased parcel workload



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.
NALC Director of
Safety and Health

Over the last few months, while on assignment in the field, I have had the opportunity to go to a number of delivery units to visit with our members at work. No surprise as to the amount of parcels that we are receiving and delivering. How we handle the increase has created logistics issues and raised safety issues that concern me.

The first challenge is getting those parcels from your workroom floor to your vehicle. You fill your hampers as much as you can, navigate across the floor and down ramp (if applicable). You then push them across the pavement to your vehicles and, if necessary, you repeat. The pencil-pushers look at repeat trips to the vehicle as inefficient and try to find ways around the challenge by making you feel that you should not make more than one trip, leaving you with the thought that some managers are concerned about safety and other managers are not.

The second challenge is having enough space in the vehicle to safely load all the parcels and make it in one trip—that is, of course, if it is possible. Sometimes it is not, so we resort to solutions that are not safe and, in fact, put you in harm's way. I have observed that many carriers are stacking up mail on their working tray and doing so in such a way that obstructs their view to the left while driving. On a recent trip, I observed only a carrier's hands because the tray was so full of parcels that it was impossible for him to see to his left. How can that carrier see what is on his left if he adds to the challenge in driving an LLV? That is an accident waiting to happen.

At the early part of my career, NALC had an agreement that instructed carriers not to load the working tray beyond the bottom nine inches of the left-side window so that we had a clear view of the road to our left. That standard should apply, as your mirrors will not make up for blocking the left-side view.

The third challenge involves getting those parcels delivered and doing so in a safe manner. If the parcel is too heavy, you need to arrange for assistance and you should not be waiting to figure this out at the delivery point. Talk to your union officers about this and get it worked out before you suffer an injury. Further, you are most likely not getting the time necessary to get these additional parcels delivered and, with time, your route becomes overburdened. Approach the union and press the issue.

The fourth challenge comes from the concept of you being pushed too hard and then making decisions that conflict with all the training that you have received. In a conversation with an officer of my branch late last year, she shared her view of the distraction factor. (Thank you, Anita.) As an example, a carrier is involved in an investigative interview based on working more hours than the pencil-pusher feels acceptable. The carrier is doing their best but by the questioning is accused of doing something wrong and as such is insulted. We battle irate customers, climate, animal interference and then the rabid manager who should be on a leash.

We are then sent to the street to perform our duties with our emotions distracting us from being able to focus our attention on performing our duties in a safe way. It's important that we remember that we sometimes have no control of overzealous or disrespectful managers. So how do you get your Zen back? Count to 10, take some deep breaths and remind yourself that it is important that you get home to your family.

The managers who are not concerned about your safety push you until you break and then they pretend to *care* about your safety when injuries happen. In their effort to deflect from accepting any responsibility for contributing to the accident/injury, they will throw you under the bus in a heartbeat instead of doing the right thing and identifying all of the contributing factors that led to the accident.

“Bring these issues to the attention of your local union officers and the safety committee to address until we find the necessary solutions.”

Article courtesy of the October 2017 NALC Postal Record



“A medium day the week before Christmas. What you don't see are the parcels that were sent out early before 7 am. We had parcel runners because the LLVs couldn't hold everything.”

Pictures (and comments) are from a unit in another state where a former Branch 782 member worked. They augment Manny's excellent article!

2018 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan
 *Hospital Pre-Certification 1-888-636-6252
 Mental & Substance Precertification 1-877-220-6252
 Prescription Drug Program 1-877-468-1016
 CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy 1-800-933-6252
 Durable Medical Equipment 1-800-237-2767
 "24/7 Nurse Hotline" 1-855-511-1893
 CVS/CareMark Pharmacist 1-877-220-6252
 Solutions for Caregivers (24/7) 1-888-636-6252
 CIGNA PPO Locator Line 1-877-468-1016
 CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval 1-877-220-6252
 Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation) 1-800-668-9682
 CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts) 1-866-784-8454
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount) 1-800-558-9443
 Disease Management Program 1-877-521-0244
 OPM Retirement Info Center 1-800-227-3728
 Federal Information Center 1-888-767-6738
 Social Security Administration Info 1-800-333-4636
 PostalEase Human Resources USPS 1-800-772-1213
 Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield) 1-877-477-3273
 LabCorp Lab Services Bakersfield (661) 631-8520
 Shared Services Option 5 live person (661) 631-9258
 1-877-477-3273

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

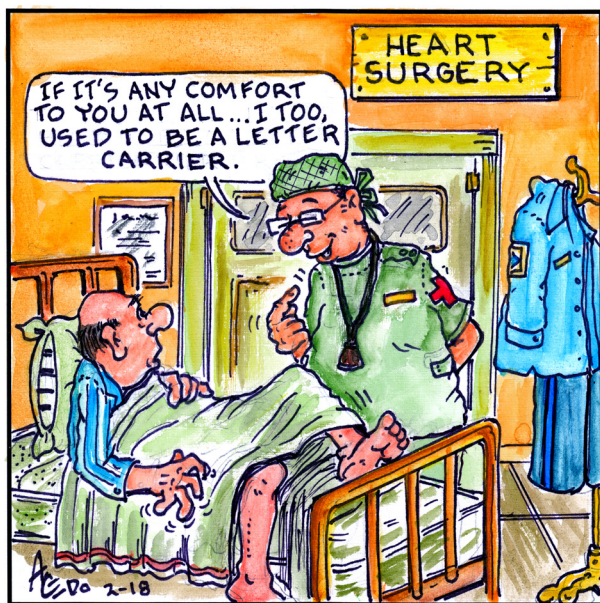
NALC Drug Prescription "Claims" Filing
 P.O. Box 521926
 Phoenix, Arizona 85072-2192

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

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

* Call for approvals Organ Transplants, DME Surgeries
 InPatient

"Out tHeRe"



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

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

We DO have a Dental Discount Program!
 Call Mark Ramirez for details...

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

PPO Deductible: Per Calendar Year
 \$300 "Individual"
 \$600 "Self & Family" or "Self Plus One"

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

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

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

OUR NALC HEALTH BENEFIT OAP (PPO) OPEN ACCESS PLUS THROUGH CIGNA

Our NALC Health Benefit coverage is accepted nation-wide and world-wide. If we utilize the CIGNA network providers, we save out-of-pocket \$\$\$ for ourselves and our NALC plan! It is a Win - Win *and* we have access to the BEST health services at a discounted rate!

I will list some of the CIGNA PPO/OAP providers in the Bakersfield area, but you can use any provider that accepts our NALC plan.

Also, log on to NALC.ORG website Health Benefit Plan under “Member Services” “HBP Site”. Access the CIGNA PPO-OAP Provider Directory to find other providers, facilities and specialists.

HOSPITALS

Mercy Hospital 2215 Truxtun Ave. 93301
(661) 632-5000 Mercy
Southwest 400 Old River Rd. 93308 (661)
663-6000
Memorial Hospital 420 34th St. 93301
(661) 327-1792

URGENT CARE FACILITIES

Sendas Urgent Care 4500 Ming Ave.
93311 (661) 587-2500 Sendas 3409
Calloway Dr. #101 93312 (661) 587-2500
Accelerated Urgent Care 4871 White Ln.
93309 (661) 832-1679
Universal Urgent Care 2121 Niles St.
93305 (661) 325-1255
(Ask about other locations)

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Pair & Marotta Physical Therapy 3400
Panama Ln. 93313 (661) 412-667
Bakersfield Sports Medicine & Physical
Therapy 3500 Coffee Rd. #A
(661) 589-6700
(Ask about other locations)

LABS (Blood Work)

QUEST Diagnostics 9500 Stockdale Hwy.
93311 (866) 697-8378
(Ask about other locations)

X-RAY/MRI CENTER

Truxtun Radiology Group 1817 Truxtun
Ave. 93301(661) 325-6800 - 3 offices
Kern Radiology Med. Center 9330 Stock-
dale Hwy. #100 (661) 326-9600
4 offices
(Ask about other locations)

AUDIOLOGY (Hearing)

Walls Hearing Aid Center 4800 Easton Dr.
#108 93309 (661) 323-1612
Newport Audiology Center 5330 Office
Ctr. 93309 (800) 675-5485
Miracle Ear 1043 Stine Rd. 93309 (888)
669-2175

CHIROPRACTIC

(Adjustments of Neck & Spine)

(6) Chiropractic offices Listed consult
NALC HBP website (CIGNA
PPO-OAP Provider Directory)

PODIATRY (Foot-Ankle)

Bakersfield Foot & Ankle Surgeons 4000
Stockdale Hwy. #C 93311 (661) 832-3600

CHILDRENS PRIMARY CARE

Valley Children’s Primary Care Group
9900 Stockdale Hwy. #105 93311
(661) 410-9500

PHARMACIES

CVS Pharmacy 5184 Stockdale Hwy.
93311 (661) 633-2066 (15 stores
(Ask about other locations)
(97) Pharmacies listed on NALC HBP
website under “Locate a Network
Pharmacy”. Examples: Walgreens, Sav-
On, Rite Aid, Wise Buy, El Tejon, Costco,
Walmart are just a few pharmacies listed.

NALC Mutual Benefit Accidental Death \$5,000 benefit

Available to all NALC members in good standing with the union — Active and Retired. Our MBA Mutual Benefit Association offers, at no cost to members, an “Accidental Death” benefit. Inquiries call MBA Myra Warren Director of Life Insurance Week Days 1-202-638-4318 and Tuesday and Thursday 1-800-424-5184.

MARK RAMIREZ

NALC HBP-MBA

Representative

Retired Letter Carrier

The Golden Empire Branch 782



2018 NALC HBP Info

Here is an additional focus on some of the facilities which you can access for your health care needs. If you have questions, call me at (661) 398-6075.

The Trucks Competing to Be the Next USPS Delivery Vehicle

The U.S. Postal Service has launched full-scale testing of a series of prototype delivery vans from which it plans to select its next mail truck.

The order will be huge for the companies involved.

The USPS will choose models from the prototypes to replace up to 180,000 mail trucks over the course of seven years, an estimated \$6.3 billion of business. The post office's current fleet is aging. Of the 215,000 mail trucks in operation, 140,000 are at least two decades old.

"Real-world" testing of the prototypes began last month in Flint, Mich., Leesburg, Va., and Tucson, Ariz., in early October. Other test locations include Tempe, Ariz., Utica, Mich., and Manassas, Va., according to the USPS.

Five contenders are participating in the competition, which the USPS has named the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle, or NGDV, program. They include two team entries: VT Hackney/Workhorse Group and Karsan/Morgan Olson. The three additional companies are AM General, Oshkosh and Mahindra.

The postal service said the winner of the vehicle contract will be announced in early-2018.

Given the Trump administration's arguably protectionist rhetoric and preference for U.S. manufacturers, it's likely the agency might opt for a full American design, said Jeffrey Osborne, a Cowen & Co. automotive analyst.

That would favor three of the contenders, AM General, Oshkosh and the Hackney entry, which is an electric vehicle that shares many components with the Workhorse W-15 electric pickup truck.

If the USPS selects an electric vehicle, it will become the largest electric vehicle fleet in the world, Osborne said. "It would be a pretty pronounced step, in terms of showing that electric vehicles are ready to hit prime time."

Whatever design the postal service selects, it will open new doors in the transportation industry, especially in the last-mile delivery, he said.

The post office plans to rotate the entries through each location every three weeks, Kim Frum, a USPS spokeswoman told Trucks.com. Already, prototypes from AM General, Hackney and Mahindra have been spotted delivering mail in the testing locations.

The test locations were chosen to determine how each test vehicle

Trucks.com Managing Editor C. Schaffner contributed to this report, photos by B. Williams

performs in different environments, including weather and landscape as well as urban and rural conditions, Frum said.

"This testing will allow the postal service the opportunity to make an informed and educated decision of the future of our fleet based on carrier feedback and observations," she said.

The agency wants the new vehicles to better accommodate an increasingly diverse mail mix, a result of a tidal wave of e-commerce deliveries.

USPS consulted with many stakeholders to develop the proposal for the vehicle prototypes, Frum said.

"Our suggestions and input were to make the vehicle safer, more ergonomic and more efficient," said Brian Renfroe, executive vice president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, which has 283,000 members.

For example, the new delivery vehicle must have a larger capacity than the Grumman Long Life Vehicle that's been in use since 1987 to handle the increase in e-commerce packages, Renfroe said. Parcel volume has increased at a double-digit rate annually since 2015, according to the association's data.

The USPS also wants to enhance safety, improve service, reduce emissions and produce operational savings, Frum said.

Specifically, the postal service has asked for trucks with a service life of 18 to 20 years, right-hand steering with two-wheel drive. It also wants a four-wheel drive option. It's looking for a van-style body with integral cargo and cab compartment constructed of aluminum alloy or composite materials; and sliding side doors. It wants a minimum 1,500-pound payload capacity and optional air conditioning.

Additionally, new designs must have 330 cubic feet to 400 cubic feet of cargo space and headroom that is a minimum of 76 inches tall, enough standing room for a 6-foot-5 letter carrier. The vehicles must have a driver's-side airbag.

The USPS declined to comment on details about the prototypes. However, the agency has said it is looking for updated safety features, including back-up cameras, warning systems, ergonomic seats and doors and antiskid surfaces.

It also said half the prototypes will use hybrid technologies, including alternative-fuel capabilities.

The Contenders:

AM GENERAL

*KARSAN/
MORGAN OLSON*

MAHINDRA

OSHKOSH

*VT HACKNEY/
WORKHORSE*

SOURCE: <https://www.trucks.com/2017/11/06/trucks-compete-next-usps-delivery-vehicle/>

AM GENERAL

AM General is based in South Bend, Ind., and manufactured the civilian Hummer H1, as well as the current military Humvee. It also built the Dispatcher Jeep — the first civilian model of the military Jeep. The DJ was used by the USPS as a delivery vehicle into the early-'90s.



The company said its mail truck prototype — designed and developed in Livonia, Mich., combines “highly reliable, low-maintenance, fuel-saving powertrain options and advanced safety systems into a durable, low operating-cost vehicle.”

A recent prototype of the AM General mail truck was spotted using an internal combustion engine with start-stop technology for improved fuel efficiency.

The truck is equipped with digital instrument gauges and a large central display screen. It also has LED headlights and exterior cameras at the front and rear. LED strips inside the cargo space increase visibility.

KARSAN/MORGAN OLSON

Karsan Otomotive, which is based in Istanbul, Turkey, has designed and built more than 277,000 gas and electric cars as well as specialty automobiles in Europe. In October, the company teamed with Morgan Olson, a Sturgis, Mich.-based manufacturer of walk-in vans that has a longstanding relationship with USPS. In 1986, USPS ordered more than 140,000 delivery bodies for its Long Life Vehicle. In 2015, USPS ordered 6,533 left-hand-drive walk-in delivery vehicles from the truck maker as part of a contract that expires this month. Morgan Olson also makes walk-in delivery vans for UPS.

For the next-generation mail truck, Karsan will provide the hybrid technology and Morgan Olson will manufacture the body.

MAHINDRA

The U.S. division of the Indian manufacturer Mahindra, known for building right-hand drive commercial vehicles, said that its design proposal emphasizes “safety, ergonomics and fuel economy all within a ground-up approach to vehicle integration.”



Rich Ansell, vice president of marketing for Mahindra North American Technical Center, confirmed testing is underway. The Mahindra prototype was recently spotted in Flint, Mich. The truck uses a 2.5-liter engine from General Motors and may be available with a mild hybrid powertrain option.

Mahindra’s vehicle designs can typically handle rugged conditions. It produces a number of commercial trucks for the Indian market, as well as the Jeeto van and the Bolero Pik-Up. Mahindra also makes electric cargo vans such as the Supro.

OSHKOSH

Oshkosk Corp. is headquartered in Oshkosh, Wis., and manufactures vehicles such as aircraft rescue and fire trucks, snow blowers, plow trucks and tactical vehicles. It also makes related equipment. Oshkosh has a long history of contracts with the federal government. Since 2009, its defense arm has delivered more than 35,700 medium tactical trucks and trailers to the U.S. Army, which just extended its contract through 2019 and awarded the company an additional order worth \$260.1 million.

VT HACKNEY/ WORKHORSE

In this joint venture, Loveland, Ohio-based Workhorse built the chassis and VT Hackney made the body. The Workhorse chassis is already being used by FedEx Ground, USPS and DHL. Workhorse has a relationship with fleet management company Ryder System Inc., which placed an order for 2,500 of its W-15 electric pickup trucks. UPS also ordered more than 300 of its Range-Extended E-Gen Model step trucks.



The company claims its E-Gen series offers a 400 percent improvement in fuel efficiency, requires 60 percent less maintenance and saves more than \$140,000 over a 20-year life. VT Hackney, is a manufacturer of specialized truck bodies and is based in Washington, N.C.

The Workhorse-VT Hackney all-electric prototype was seen delivering mail in Leesburg, Va. It has a small BMW gasoline engine that acts as a generator to extend the range of the truck. It has an attention-grabbing profile featuring a low-slung aerodynamic hood, oversized windows and an upright stance for the cargo box.

WHAT’S NEXT??

Postmaster General Megan Brennan told the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in a hearing on Feb. 7 that the agency may use a “bridge strategy” as it has in the past, which means incrementally replacing up to 12,000 vehicles at a time.

As the agency looks for its next truck, it’s already thinking ahead. The USPS is also working with the University of Michigan on an autonomous mail delivery truck, which it hopes to introduce to select rural routes across the country by 2025.

In one possible scenario, a worker could sit behind the wheel sorting mail and doing other tasks as the truck automatically drives the route.

“ In one possible scenario, a worker could sit behind the wheel sorting mail and doing other tasks as the truck automatically drives the route. ”

Start Saving Your Money!!!

by Tim Roberts, Executive Vice President
NALC Branch 44

A short but important message this month...

If you are a CCA, and have not started saving towards retirement, you may be missing the boat.

Money grows in the early years and you cannot afford to miss 1, 2, 3 years of saving.

The NALC MBA Plan offers you to save now and roll it into your Thrift Savings Account when you make Regular.

This is SO important!



Tim Roberts

Article courtesy of the Manchester, NH NALC Branch 44 February 2018 edition of the 44 Magnum



Application for Individual Flexible Premium Deferred Annuity with the UNITED STATES LETTER CARRIERS MUTUAL BENEFIT ASSOCIATION A Fraternal Benefit Society

100 Indiana Avenue N.W. • Washington, DC 20001 • 202-638-4318

CCA Retirement Savings Plan

1. I want a CCA Retirement Savings Plan with a planned biweekly premium of:
 \$15 (Minimum): \$25: \$35: \$50: Other (Specify: \$_____)

My spouse wants a CCA Retirement Savings Plan with a planned biweekly premium of:
 \$15 (Minimum): \$25: \$35: \$50: Other (Specify: \$_____)

2. NALC Member's Information: (Please print or type) Social Security No. _____
 Name _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last)
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone No. (_____) _____
(Area Code) Member's sex M F
 Date of Birth ____/____/____
(Mo / Day / Yr) Sex M F

3. Information about Spouse:
 Name _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last)
 Social Security No. _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____
(Mo / Day / Yr)

4. **Ownership:** The insured (annuitant) will be the policy owner of his/her policy unless otherwise specified below:
The owner must be in accordance with the provisions in the USLCMBA Constitution General Laws – LAW 1.
 Owner _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last)
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Relationship to Annuitant: _____ Social Security No. _____

5. **Will this policy be used as a:** *(Select only one option)*
 Traditional Individual Retirement Account Roth Individual Retirement Account Non-qualified Deferred Annuity

6. **Payroll Deduction:** I hereby authorize the U.S. Postal Service: (1) to deduct each pay period from my salary or wages such amounts as may be required by the U.S. Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association to pay premiums due from me for insurance and (2) to pay the amounts thereof on my behalf to the USLCMBA. The authorization shall continue during my employment in any capacity by the U.S. Postal Service until canceled by me by written notice to the USLCMBA.
Note: By signing below, you authorize deduction of your premium unless you check box below. Payroll deductions start approximately 28 days after receipt of your application. **I do not want to use payroll deduction** *(check one):* Bill me monthly Bill me annually

7. **Beneficiary:** The beneficiary(ies) named below of this policy application will receive the proceeds when the insured dies:

Name _____	Address _____	Relationship _____	Social Security No _____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

If you need additional space, use a separate page.

8. **Effective Date:** Your plan will be effective on the date the first premium for the plan is deducted from member's pay, or if you pay MBA directly, on the first day of the month following the receipt of your first payment.

9. **Replacement:** Do you have existing life insurance or annuity contracts? Yes No
 Is this policy (are these policies) intended to replace or change any existing life insurance or annuity policy? Yes No
 If yes, indicate:
 Name of Insurance Co. _____ Policy No. _____

Any person who knowingly presents a false statement in an application for insurance may be guilty of a criminal offense and subject to penalties under state law.
 I (we) understand and agree that this application as completed and signed will form the basis of the policy (policies) issued.

Proposed Insured's Signature	Date	Do Not Write Below
Member Applicant's Signature	Date	USPS Finance Number _____ St. Code _____

Form ICC14-860A-CCA 2/15





A few things to ponder...

Insights shared by Mark Ramirez:

FAKE NEWS, WITHOUT REAL FACTS, IS FOR THE GULLIBLE

The tsunami of fake news that is appearing throughout the world is a cancer to knowledge and our democracy.

“Fun Fact: Do you know who invented the term ‘FAKE NEWS’? It was Hitler. Look it up. YES, Hitler loved to describe any newspaper that exposed him for what he was as ‘Lugen- presse’ which is German for “Lying Press.” Today, we hear the words ‘Fake News’...”

Oliver Markus Malloy

“The media are less a window on reality, than a stage on which officials and journalists perform self- scripted, self-serving fiction.”

Thomas Sowell

“The problem with wearing a façade is that sooner or later life shows up with a big pair of sissors.”

Craig D. Lounsborough

“Cruel people offer pity when they no longer feel threatened. However, kind people offer compassion and understanding regardless.”

Shannon L. Adler

“You don’t look fake when you unconsciously pretend.”

Pushpa Rana

“You can dress up greed, but you can’t stop the stench.”

Craig D. Lounsborough

“Lies sound like facts to those who’ve been conditioned to miss-recognize the truth.”

Da Shanne Stokes

“Alternate facts and fake news are just other names for “propa- ganda.”

Johnny Corn

“The cure to eliminate “fake news’ is that people stop reading 140 character tweets and start reading 600 page books.”

Piero Scaruffi

“Since Social Media arrived, social skills have declined, and fake became real and narcissists thrive.”

Sanjo Jendayi

“The most dangerous among us came dressed as angels, and we learned too late, they are the “Devil in Disguise.”

Carlos Wallace

“Any halfway clever Devil would decorate the highway to Hell as beautiful as possible.”

Criss Jami

“We live in a world where illusion reigns and reality is frowned upon.”

Sanjo Jendayi

“The business of lying is transacted in the abode of the gullible.”

Michael Bassey Johnson

“Often those that criticize others, reveals what he himself lacks.”

Shannon L. Alder

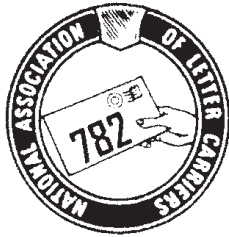
“It’s not the lie that bothers me. It’s the insult to my intelligence that I find offensive.”

Unknown Author

MARK RAMIREZ
Retired Letter Carrier
The Golden Empire Branch 782

“All this was inspired by the principle – which is quite true in itself – that in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily; and thus in the primitive simplicity of their minds they more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie...”

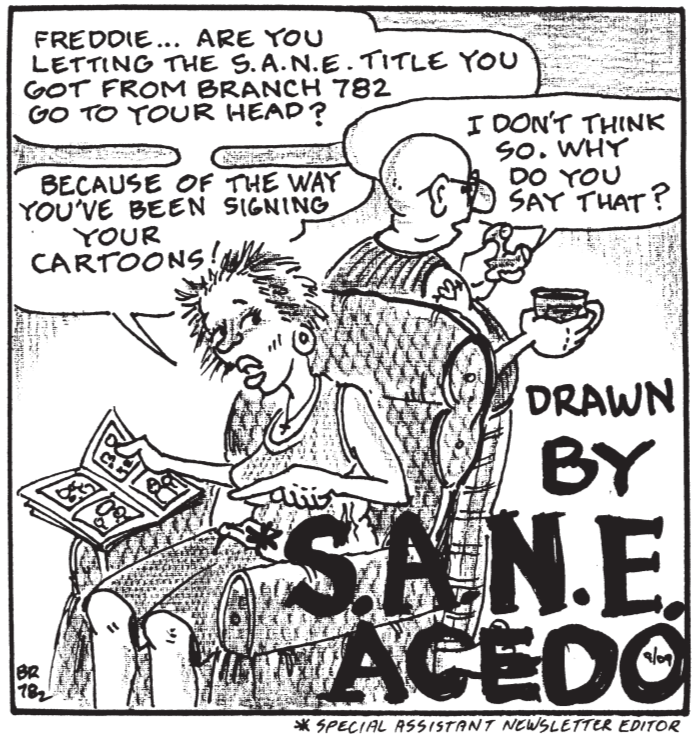
From the book “Mein Kampf” by Adolph Hitler



from the editor-guy

The *NALC Editor Resource Book* is Volume II of Fred Acedo cartoons. It presents almost 1100 of Fred Acedo's cartoons published in our newsletter from 2003 - 2016. This book builds on the almost 500 cartoons in the original **Out tHeRe** book which featured his work from 1993 through 2002. *Welcome to Volume II!*

You may have questions about how this book can be used or whether or not it will be a good investment. You can call me at the phone number listed below. You can write to me, or you can e-mail me at BRZIII@AOLCOM. I would be glad to answer your questions or give you an idea of how this product can be a creative tool for your current or future NALC editor in presenting information to NALC members. (*Please follow this trail ****)



This book is an excellent book of clip art designed specifically for, by and about NALC members and our world. (Yes. I am biased. I believe that this **IS** an excellent book of clip art! I hope that you agree...)

Additionally, an index is provided that links ALL of the cartoons in both the original **Out tHeRe** and in Volume II to assist editors in searching out cartoons by topic (e.g. dogs, injuries, supervisors, etc.).

BASIL ZUNIGA

Please send me one or more *NALC Editor Resource Books*! I want Fred's cartoons!

Base cost is **\$30** but you can donate more. (Cost covers wear & tear, paper, toner, etc.)

***** SPECIAL OFFER:** I will include a copy of **Out tHeRe** with this order. **500 more cartoons!**

When you order, please indicate if you are an NALC Editor!

NALC Branch 782 ● 2628 F Street ● Bakersfield, California ● 93301 ● (661) 205-1603

Curious about what you might be getting? Check out the sample featured on the following page.

OUT THERE



Originally published November 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published November 2009



Originally published December 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published December 2009

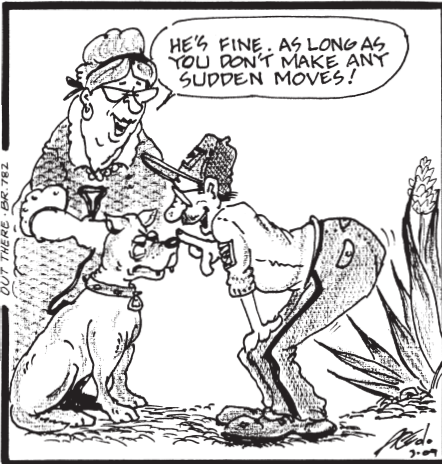
S.A.N.E.



IT WAS THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS AND IN AN ATTEMPT TO APPEASE HIS CARRIERS FOR ALL THEIR EFFORTS AND SACRIFICES DURING THE TENUOUS ROUTE ADJUSTMENTS AND FOR THE PETTY DISCIPLINES THEY HAD TO ENDURE, THE STATION MGR. DONNED A SANTA SUIT AND OFFERED FRESH DONUTS...WHEN SUDDENLY THE FESTIVE GESTURE WENT AWRY.

Originally published December 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published December 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published December 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published December 2009

This is a sample. You are looking at page 82 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016 ...

As federal employees, letter carriers can make charitable donations through the world's largest annual workplace giving program, the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), through deductions from our paychecks.

"Letter carriers are known for taking care of our communities," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "The CFC is a convenient way for letter carriers to support their favorite charities."

Pledges made by donors during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations chosen by the donor.

CFC makes it easy for all federal employees to donate online and giving federal retirees an easy option for donating through deductions from their annuities. To donate online, an employee needs to register an account at opm.gov/showsomelovecfc.



Carriers can choose the charity or group of charities they want to support from a list of more than 2,000 eligible charities, and an amount they choose will be deducted from their paychecks each pay period and automatically sent to each charity.

"The combined effort of letter carriers and other federal employees makes a huge difference to the charities that support our communities each year," Rolando said.

All letter carriers can participate in the CFC.

Rolando asked NALC members to contribute through the CFC in addition to the other ways they support the community.

"Each day, within the communities where we live and deliver the mail, many of us encounter people who are enduring real-life problems," Rolando wrote. "Throughout the year, we help our communities in a number of ways while looking after those who are vulnerable. In addition to what we do each day in the neighborhoods we serve, the Combined Federal Campaign gives us an easy way to contribute money through payroll deductions to the charities you care about."

NALC is directly involved in three such charities:

- **The Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF, CFC No. 10268)** provides financial support to postal employees whose homes are damaged or destroyed by natural disasters, such as Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. The charity is run by the four postal employee unions and three management organizations, whose members support PERF through voluntary donations. PERF grants money to homeowners and renters alike to help with deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses that insurance claims don't cover, and to assist with replacement of lost property and temporary housing. Information and applications for PERF assistance can be found at postalrelief.com.
- **The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA, CFC No. 10561)** is NALC's only official charity. It is the world's leading non-profit health organization sponsoring research into the causes of, and effective treatments for, neuromuscular diseases. MDA research grants support about 150 research projects worldwide, as well as camps and activities for children who have one of these diseases. For more information, go to mdausa.org.
- **United Way Worldwide (CFC No. 11188)** is the leadership and support organization for the network of nearly 1,800 community-based United Ways in 40 countries and territories. The United Way's focus is creating community-based and community-led solutions that strengthen the cornerstones for a good quality of life: education, financial stability and health. For more information, go to unitedway.org.

Sometimes Letter Carriers are a beacon of hope to people brought to their knees by a natural disaster, bringing vital supplies or documents—and a reminder that life will be normal again—to customers hit by a storm, flood or fire.

But, postal workers can also be victims. To look out for our postal family, the NALC supports the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF).

Since 1990, PERF has been there to help carriers, clerks and other active and retired postal workers rebuild after hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and wildfires. Initially created to assist postal employees affected by Hurricane Hugo and the San Francisco Bay-area earthquake, the fund has gone on to provide thousands grants totaling millions of dollars since it began.

PERF will continue to be there for postal workers with simple structure for determining eligibility and grant amounts.

Applicants do not need to wait until after they receive insurance settlements or other emergency relief to apply for help from PERF, though they still must provide documentation of the loss. The application must come to PERF no later than six month after the disaster, except under extenuating circumstances. To qualify for assistance, the applicant's home must have been destroyed or damaged to the point of being uninhabitable for a long period (an estimated 90 days or more). Non-career and retired employees in either situation are eligible for half these amounts.

In addition to floods or storms, loss of a home in a fire is included, but only when caused by a natural disaster—for instance, a home lost to lightning or wildfire could qualify; a fire caused by an electrical short or stray cigarette would not.

Source: NALC Website <https://www.nalc.org/community-service/postal-employees-relief-fund-perf>

Back to the future of solidarity



**Fredric V.
Rolando**

The story of NALC is the story of an ever-expanding circle of solidarity. That solidarity started in the 1860s, long before we created a national union. In those early years, in cities and towns across America, letter carriers created mutual benefit societies that focused on providing support to sick and injured letter carriers when they could not work.

This need to look out for each other was essential in our pre-collective-bargaining period. It remains essential today—and now it extends to *all* U.S. letter carriers, no matter where we live. The series of destructive hurricanes that ravaged parts

of the United States in September and October makes this clear. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of our fellow letter carriers need our help. Right now.

Harvey. Irma. Maria. Nate. These hurricanes have devastated communities in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and other states along the Gulf of Mexico.

I am sure that many members have given what they can to various relief organizations. And, of course, as federal taxpayers, we are all doing our part to fund the national relief effort—and we thank the federal employees of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense, the National Weather Service and many other agencies for all of their incredible work over the past few months.

But formal relief efforts can do only so much for Americans who have lost their homes, their cars, their clothes, their family mementos and so much more as a result of the hurricanes. These efforts are vital, but for millions of our fellow citizens, the road to recovery will be a long and hard one. They will need more help.

The situation in Puerto Rico, home to 3.4 million U.S. citizens, is especially grim. It was hit by two Category 5 hurricanes within two weeks (Irma and Maria). As we go to print this month, nearly 90 percent of the island's residents still have no electricity. Nearly half lack drinkable water. Two-thirds of the cell phone towers remain inoperable.

I'm happy to say that almost all of the territory's post offices are up and running again: Our members are heroically serving their fellow Puerto Ricans at this time of crisis, even

as they face their own devastating losses. By doing so, they have restored the only truly universal communication service our country has.

So what can the rest of us do for the states and U.S. territories affected by the hurricanes? At a minimum, we can focus our efforts on our fellow union members.

That's exactly what our labor movement is doing. On Oct. 3, the AFL-CIO organized an amazing airlift of 300 nurses, doctors, dockworkers, heavy machinery operators, truck drivers and other workers to participate in relief efforts in Puerto Rico. These volunteers were recruited by their respective unions. The AFL-CIO also coordinated fundraising efforts among the millions of Americans who belong to unions to assist union households in all of the affected regions.

NALC answered the call by making financial contributions to the relief funds set up by the state labor federations in Texas and Florida and to the Union Community Fund, a charitable arm of the AFL-CIO, which will use the money collected to direct aid to union members in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Several members, branches and state associations also have provided direct assistance to members in our Caribbean branches.

Each and every letter carrier can also make contributions to the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF). PERF was set up in 1990 to help postal families who have suffered personal losses due to natural disasters. It was established by the Postal Service, its unions and other employee organizations and was designed to provide just the kind of long-term relief that the victims of the recent hurricanes will need after initial short-term assistance from FEMA, the Red Cross and insurance companies runs out. We can make a huge difference if a large number of our 284,000 active and retired members give just a little bit. Visit nalc.org/perf to make a contribution today.

Finally, I believe it may be time for NALC to consider building some capacity to provide immediate assistance to NALC members following future natural disasters. I can imagine developing a protocol for mobilizing resources and coordinating immediate actions to help members in conjunction with NALC branches in affected areas. In the near future, we will convene a meeting of emergency planning experts and branch leaders with recent crisis-relief experience to discuss ways that NALC could fill in some of the gaps left by other relief efforts.

Please do what you can to help your fellow Americans and fellow letter carriers hurt by the hurricanes. In the best NALC tradition, let's once again expand the circle of solidarity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fredric V. Rolando', written in a cursive style.

This was NALC President Rolando's message in the November 2017 *Postal Record*. What makes his comments seem prescient is that he wrote them well before the fires in Northern and Southern California had wrought their devastation. Please make the time to review the stories about the "expanding circle of solidarity" featured on pages 24 - 26.



Delivery Under Fire

By Paul Drapkin, NALC Branch 2902
Executive Vice President

When I wrote this article, much of Ventura County was on fire. Parts of Los Angeles County were also on fire.

Several of the Post Offices that our Branch covers, including Ventura, Santa Paula, Ojai, Fillmore and the San Fernando/Sylmar area have been greatly affected by these devastating fires. Several others such as Oak View, Carpinteria and Montecito that are not in our Branch or that are only serviced by Rural Routes have also been affected or did not have any ability to deliver the mail.

Several of our Carriers had to evacuate their homes when flames and smoke approached dangerous conditions and authorities or common sense made it clear that it was time to go.

In Ventura, Santa Paula and Ojai several Carriers were overcome by smoke and/or the particulate matter in the air caused by the fire and either had to leave work or were unable to go on the street to deliver any mail.

As of the writing of this article, there was at least four days' worth of mail at the Ojai P.O. that had not been delivered. Furthermore, the Thomas fire, which started on the evening of December 4th, had burned more than 275,000 acres and has yet to be contained. (In the end, it turned out that the Thomas fire is now considered the largest wildfire in the state's history.)

The Creek fire in the Sylmar/Lake View Terrace/Little Tujunga Canyon area, as I wrote this, was contained or completely out. But, it burned more than 15,000 acres — albeit, most of that being in the Angeles National Forest. However, many homes were lost.

It was reported to me that two Postal Service employees have lost their homes.

Overall, the Post Office officials, namely MPOO Russ Partee (who I was in contact with on a daily basis during the time of the fires) was very cooperative by keeping the Union Hall informed of the health and safety of

the Carriers. He apprised us of the conditions in each of the cities affected and the status of mail delivery, or lack thereof, in each of the cities affected.

He was very appreciative of the manner in which the Carriers continued to persevere in an attempt to make as many of the deliveries as possible, even at times when it was questionable as to whether or not they should be out making deliveries. He indicated to me that there were a few instances in which management



Pictured on these two pages are dramatic photos taken from the back dock of the Ojai P.O. during the week the Thomas fire raged through the area. Notice how the Carriers continue to prepare the mail even in the face of the oncoming threat.

literally had to instruct Carriers that they must return to the office as conditions were such that they should not be out delivering. Sometimes, this was to the chagrin of the Carrier involved.



I was also assured that the proper N-95 masks were available for any and all to wear. We never received any calls from anyone indicating that management was placing pressure on them to go out and deliver mail when the air quality conditions were

unhealthy or the fire was a danger.

I have had many people ask me, "At what point is it considered too unhealthy to be out delivering mail?" My answer was, and will continue to be, it doesn't matter what any official agency may state as to what the air quality is. If your health is directly affected by the air quality that wildfires create, then YOU must make the judgement for yourself as to when you are placing yourself in danger or an unsafe condition.

It is not unreasonable to let management know that you are so affected by the conditions that you are working in that you must remove yourself from the hazard and go home or even seek medical attention if required. No Supervisor, Manager or Postmaster can order you to work in conditions that are considered to be unsafe.

We have a job that exposes us to the elements that Mother Nature throws at us. We work in the freezing cold of Minnesota winters and the boiling temperatures of Southern California summers. Working in adverse conditions is nothing new to Letter Carriers.

However, placing yourself in danger in an unexpected situation like a wildfire and all the hazardous conditions that arise from that, is not a requirement of working for the Postal Service. I realize that many of you will say that the freezing cold of Minnesota or the boiling summers in Southern California are extreme conditions.

While there is some merit to that argument, the fact is that we sign up for those extreme conditions as soon as we begin employment with the USPS as Letter Carriers.

Carrying mail while in the midst of a wildfire or breathing unhealthy air resulting from wildfires is *not* something we sign up for.

The vast majority of Carriers continued to show up at work and get the mail delivered. It's just our nature to get the job done. In some places like Ojai, Santa Paula or Ventura, where the conditions were unsafe or where the authorities simply did not allow access, delivery of the mail was suspended.

As important as getting the mail delivered is, it is *never* worth risking our health and/or personal safety. While the unofficial motto of USPS Letter Carriers may be "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," delivering mail in the middle of a fire or while breathing air that is filled with soot from a fire is one of the elements that will stay a Carrier from their appointed rounds!

I want to thank all the Carriers who continued to perform their job in what was clearly considered less than favorable conditions during this very difficult time, and especially when it came during the peak season of Christmas rush.

In addition, I want to thank our National President, Fred Rolando, for making a station visit to the Sylmar P.O. during this trying time on December 16. The Carriers and even the management staff in Sylmar really seemed to enjoy this rare opportunity to have the National President, and the accompanying National Business Agent Bryant Almario and two of the Regional Administrative Assistants, Calvin Brookins and Jeff Frazee, make a station visit. The experience really seemed to brighten the morning.

Imagine looking across your front porch and being greeted by this sight...



NALC Branch 2902 Recording Secretary Laura Rowe doesn't have to imagine what it might have looked like.

She is the one who took this picture from her home!

A portion of an article originally published by NALC Branch 2902 in the January/February 2018 Chatsworth, CA Mail Bag News.

from the editor-guy

In December, this newsletter featured a piece about events which had impacted Brother and Sister Letter Carriers.

It's time for an update... Thank you, NALC Branch 183 Executive Vice President Linda James!!

It has now been four months since the worst wildfires in California history hit the North Bay area, including much of Santa Rosa. The blackened landscape is slowly changing: debris hauled away, lots cleared of charred remains and toxic soil, green grass coming up on bare hillsides. Many of the families that lost their homes have now found places to stay... at least temporarily. However, the reality is that the cost of renting a place has skyrocketed.

Friends of mine are working with a builder and are drawing up plans to rebuild on their lot in the devastated Coffey Park area. There, I saw a hopeful sign recently: a foundation being poured and a construction crew on site. A contractor friend says that building permits have never been easier to obtain!

All of the outwardly hopeful signs that you do see, however, don't show the whole picture. Every single day, many

times a day, people who have lost everything think about something that is gone forever. Photo albums, children's artwork, family heirlooms are now just precious memories. All of the little possessions and details that make life easier (scissors, tape, flashlights) have to be purchased as life goes on.

But it isn't only the material goods that are missing. *It's the loss of a sense of safety and well-being that may be most devastating.* Along with the grief and the PTSD that people are going through, just the smell of smoke can send survivors into a panic.

Importantly, something else permeates our atmosphere. It is the sense of community and support that literally arose out of the disaster ashes! Stories of friends, neighbors and complete strangers helping each other out are heart warming and plentiful.

Sonoma County Strong lives on!

LINDA JAMES

North Coast Branch 183



National Association OF LETTER CARRIERS

888 THIRD STREET
PHONE (707) 578-0384

SANTA ROSA, CA 95404-4529
FAX (707) 578-9308

Dear Sister Isolde,

1 February, 2018

We want to thank you for your generous donation of raingear and uniforms! These items will be a real help to those of our members who lost everything during the October fires.

We are so grateful for our Union brothers and sisters, who have sent their messages of care and support, as well as donations. Branch 782 has been a real friend to us during this difficult time, and we hope you all know how much we appreciate everything you've done!

In solidarity,
the members of NALC Branch 183

Linda James

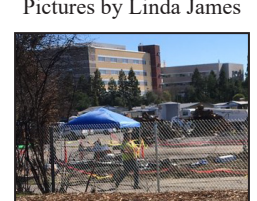
Linda James
Executive Vice President

tax i.d. # 946174921

Branch 782 member Isolde Marroquin made a very generous donation of uniform items to the members of Branch 183.

This is a copy of the thank you letter which was mailed to her.

To the many others who assisted in any way, Thank You So Very Much!!!



Pictures by Linda James

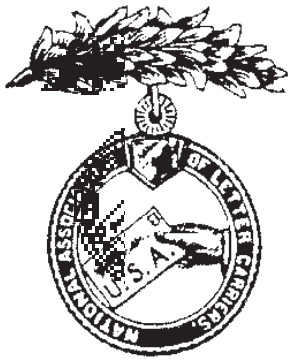
12th BATTLE
Annual OF THE STATIONS
February 18 Southwest Lanes
3610 Wible Road, Bakersfield, CA 09

WERE YOU THERE???
Hopefully, there will be pix next month!!

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

This month YOU could win \$500!

*THE FINE PRINT: To win the money YOU have to be present when YOUR name is drawn...



Branch Officers

President	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Vice-President	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Recording Secretary	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
Treasurer	Molly Biggar	(661) 832-0393
Financial Secretary	Anita Holderman	(661) 487-5353
HBP & MBA Rep.	Mark Ramirez	(661) 398-6075
Sargeant-at-Arms	Frank Martinez	(661) 703-4212
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Trustee	Darryl Holderman	(661) 332-9201

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

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

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

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. E-mails are preferred...

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

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

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The "S.A.N.E."*
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General Meeting Wednesday February 28, 2018 7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

In Memorium

Benjamin "Bennie" Aguilar

Details on page 7

In Memorium

Phillip "Big Dude" Krause

Details on page 8

In Memorium

Gilbert Ochoa

Details on page 9

"OuT tHeRe"



This Fred Acedo art was originally published in our newsletter in 1994. Seemed like an appropriate opportunity to resurrect the message.

Death is inevitable. Of course, when young, the notion of "My death" is a concept which is somewhere "Over the Horizon". It can pretty much be ignored most of the time. And, even after we get a little older, the whole pace of our lives keeps us focused on everything else.

Of course, there *ARE* those reports of folks who are killed in traffic incidents or freak occurrences. However, the notion that "*I will die*" never seems to really merit our attention.

Take a look at the information on pages 4-6 of this newsletter. Could be important..

Print version of the newsletter had 20 pages. Web version has 28 pages. More info. More "schtuff"!!!