

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



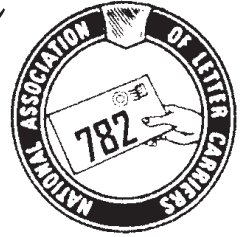
ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 5

MAY 2017

USPS & NALC NEGOTIATE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

The National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service have reached tentative agreement on a national labor contract, covering 213,000 active city Letter Carriers across America.

For additional details, see pages 2 - 4



Taft, California



Shafter, California



Ridgecrest, California



Bakersfield, California

	2017	2016
Arvin (93203)	536	255
Avenal (93204)	1190	800
Delano (93215)	4928	3756
Lamont (93241)	413	300
McFarland (93250)	1072	536
Shafter (93263)	4651	4631
Taft (93268)	6474	4500
Wasco (93280)	2694	3216
Downtown Station (93301)	2651	2664
South Station (93304)	7772	9743
East Brundage (93305/07)	9212	10276
Hillcrest Station (93306)	9394	11068
Dole Court (93308/12/14)	17143	24520
Stockdale Station (93309)	11431	13620
Camino Media (93311/13)	5614	6638
Mojave (93501)	700	347
California City (93504)	1100	825
Boron (93516)	422	391
Edwards AF Base (93523)	536	403
Tehachapi (93561)	2465	2465
Ridgecrest (93555)	11500	13760
Trona (93562)	450	---

See pages 5 - 7 for more Food Drive information...

The National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service have reached tentative agreement on a national labor contract, covering 213,000 active city Letter Carriers across America.

The tentative agreement includes provisions rewarding all letter Carriers for their contributions to the Postal Service's extraordinary comeback following the Great Recession; narrowing the compensation gap between City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) and career Letter Carriers; creating a formal mechanism to address the problems that have undermined the workplace culture of the Postal Service for much of its history; and preserving the core achievements of our bargaining history, including regular general wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), protections against outsourcing and layoffs, as well as other contractual elements that define our standard of living.



NALC President Fredric V. Rolando issued the following statement after the NALC Executive Council unanimously recommended approval of the tentative settlement:

“I’d like to thank all the officers and staff who worked so hard to help reach this tentative National Agreement. Most importantly, I want to thank our members for their patience and steadfast solidarity during the long bargaining process – the strength and unity of our union has always been our most important asset in collective bargaining. Although we were fully prepared, if necessary, to fight for our interests in binding interest arbitration, I am very happy that our members will have a chance to make the final decision about this contract through the ratification process outlined in our union’s constitution. The Executive Council unanimously recommends ratification of this contract.”

The major features of the contract are summarized below. Full details about the tentative agreement, along with paycharts, other contractual changes and information about new and amended memorandum of understanding (MOUs), will be presented in the next NALC Bulletin and in the June issue of The Postal Record. They will also be distributed through the union’s electronic platforms in the days to come. All these communication channels will also be used to announce the members of the Ballot Committee (who will oversee the ratification vote); the timing and details of the ratification process; and the arrangements for the 2017 National Rap Session, a meeting that will be held in mid-June to educate branch leaders about the proposed contract so they can pass on information to their members before they cast ratification ballots.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS HIGHLIGHTS OF TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

2016-2019 NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Term

The 2016 National Agreement will last 40 months, covering the period May 21, 2016, to Sept. 20, 2019.

General wage increases and pay upgrade

All letter carriers, career and non-career alike, will receive two wage increases and a pay upgrade result-

ing from a consolidation of the letter carrier pay grades as follows:

- 1.2 percent effective Nov. 26, 2016, paid retroactively.
- 1.3 percent effective Nov. 25, 2017.
- Carriers paid at the Grade 1 level will be upgraded to Grade 2, and all Grade 2 carriers will receive 2.1 percent additional compensation for all hours effective Nov. 24, 2018.

CCAs will receive additional wage increases of 1.0 percent on these three dates for a total of: 2.2 percent on Nov. 26, 2016 (paid retroactively); 2.3 percent on Nov. 25, 2017; and an additional 1.0 percent increase at the time of the upgrade, Nov. 24, 2018. These additional increases will be paid in lieu of COLAs for CCAs.

Cost-of-living adjustments for career Letter Carriers

All career letter carriers will receive seven COLAs based on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) and using the existing COLA formula and the July 2014 CPI as the base month. The first two COLAs will be paid retroactively and the remaining five will be paid in the future as follows:

- The first COLA will be \$21 annually effective Sept. 3, 2016, paid retroactively.
- The second COLA will be \$333 annually effective March 4, 2017, paid retroactively.
- The third COLA will be effective in September 2017.
- The fourth COLA will be effective in March 2018.
- The fifth COLA will be effective in September 2018.
- The sixth COLA will be effective in March 2019.
- The seventh COLA will be effective in September 2019.

The COLAs will be applied to the two pay tables for career city carriers in the same manner used in the 2011 National Agreement.

Recently retired Letter Carriers

Letter carriers who have retired over the last several months will receive applicable retroactive general wage increases and COLAs. The Office of Personnel Management will also make any annuity adjustments made necessary by the retroactive increases.

Step increases for City Carrier Assistants

The tentative agreement would establish step increases for CCAs. In addition to the wage increases described above, CCAs will receive a 50 cents per hour raise after 12 weeks of service and an additional 50 cents per hour increase after an additional 40 weeks of service. These step increases will be paid retroactively to Nov. 26, 2016, for CCAs with paid hours since Nov. 26, 2016. For example, CCAs with 52 weeks of service as of Nov. 26, 2016, will get a \$1.00 per hour raise, effective on that date and paid retroactively.

Step advancement for certain former transitional employees

Effective May 26, 2018, eligible former transitional employees (TEs) will be advanced in Table 2 of the letter carrier pay scale based on their length of service as TEs after Sept. 29, 2007. Such former TEs will be entitled to between one and four step increases as follows:

Length of creditable TE service	Number of additional steps
2 years but less than 3 years	1
3 years but less than 4 years	2
4 years but less than 5 years	3
5 or more years	4

For those eligible former TEs converted to career status prior to May 26, 2018, the step advancement will be effective on that date. For those converted thereafter, the step advancement will be effective upon conversion to career status. All employees eligible for step advancement will retain time-in-step credit.

Health Insurance

In 2017, there is no change in the Postal Service's share of premium costs for career letter carriers' health insurance (76 percent of the weighted average Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) plan premium, capped at 79.25 percent of any given plan premium). Following the pattern of previous contracts, the Postal Service's share will decline by a total of 3.0 percent over the term of the tentative agreement. The share will decrease to 74 percent in 2018 and to 73 percent in 2019. The maximum employer contribution for any given plan will be 77.25% in 2018 and 76.0% in 2019. Over the course of the entire contract, the Postal Service's share for career letter carriers will remain higher than that paid by other federal agencies that participate in the FEHBP (72 percent of the average premium, capped at 75 percent for any given plan).

The bi-weekly impact of these Article 21 changes will depend on which plans carriers enroll in but will, in any case, represent a small fraction of the bi-weekly pay increases provided by Article 9 of the tentative agreement.

On health insurance for CCAs, the tentative contract maintains the Postal Service's bi-weekly contribution of \$125 toward self-only coverage in the USPS Non-career Health Plan, but it would significantly increase the Postal Service's contribution toward self-plus-one and self-and-family coverage in that plan (now set at the same \$125 bi-weekly contribution available for self-only coverage). In the initial year of CCA employment, the USPS will pay 65 percent of the premium costs. In the second year of CCA employment and beyond, the USPS share would rise to 75 percent of the total premium.

Continued on next page...

This summarizes major features of the contract. Full details about the tentative agreement, along with pay charts, other contractual changes and information about new and amended Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), will be presented in the next NALC Bulletin and in the June issue of The Postal Record.

Job security protections for Letter Carriers

The no-layoff clause that protects letter carriers after six years of service as career employees is retained in the tentative agreement. In addition, prohibitions against contracting out city carrier work would be continued for the duration of the 2016-2019 contract, if the contract is ratified.

Joint Workplace Improvement Process

The tentative accord includes an MOU on improving workplace culture. The parties have agreed to establish a Joint Workplace Improvement Process to address a number of issues to provide safe, efficient work environments in which employees are treated with dignity and respect.

CCA complement and conversion to career status

Upon ratification, there would be a one-time conversion to career status for CCAs with relative standing date at least 30 months prior to the ratification date. The conversions would work as follows:

- In 200-workyear offices, eligible CCAs will be converted to full-time regular career status in their installation.
- In 125- and 100-workyear offices, eligible CCAs will be converted to part-time flexible career status in their installation, rather than waiting to convert to full-time career status as a CCA.

The parties have agreed to consider the possibility of another one-time conversion after one year.

Additionally, the parties have agreed to address situations where CCAs work in small offices with no clear path to a career opportunity.

There is no increase to the CCA employment caps in Article 7 of the Agreement or to the number of CCAs

currently on the rolls. However, the Postal Service will maintain a percentage of the additional CCAs previously agreed to by the parties through a number of MOUs. These MOUs, which would continue in the tentative agreement, have provided additional career conversion opportunities for CCAs, about 47,000 to date. The vast majority of these CCAs did not have to serve probationary periods as career employees. The MOUs continue to include a weekly meeting to monitor appropriate staffing levels through career conversions and voluntary transfer requests.

CCA holidays

The tentative agreement provides for six paid holidays for CCAs.

CCA leave provisions in Local Agreements

The agreement requires the parties to negotiate choice and incidental leave provisions for CCAs during local implementation. It also establishes an alternate dispute resolution process for impasses related to CCA leave prior to arbitration.

Article 8 Improvements

All overtime, regardless of whether such overtime was worked on a carrier's own route, will count toward equitability for overtime desired list (ODL) carriers. Additionally, management will be required to post equitability totals weekly, rather than quarterly.

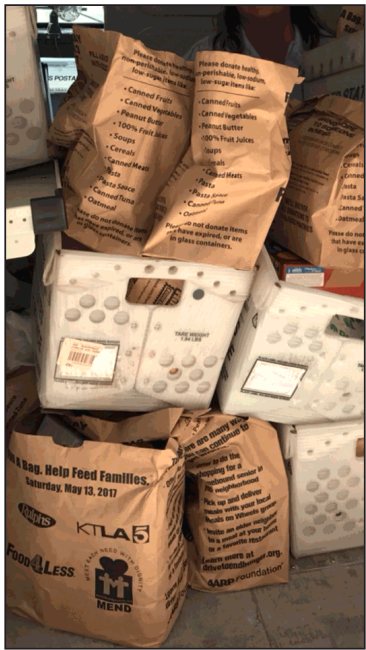
An MOU is incorporated into the agreement to continue to allow the local parties the option of developing a process that allows employees who transfer from another installation or are converted to full time following the sign-up period to place their names on either the ODL or the work assignment list. Existing agreements pursuant to previous versions of this MOU will remain in effect.

Information courtesy of the NALC Website [<https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/tentative-national-agreement-is-reached>]

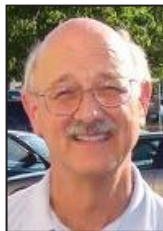
Congratulations to the newest members of the “Million Mile Club”!!



South Station's Danny Blair and Deborah Harvey



at the
Mike:



How did we do This Year?

102,348 Pounds!

LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE
 SAT., MAY 13, 2017



Thank you to following folks for pix: Hermi Encinas, Anita Holderman, Lynell Howell, Karen Hughes, Mike Munoz, Pam Smith — and to Norma Hamer who did such a great job of coordinating this!



As I write this article, I am currently in Colorado. This is only the second time that I have missed the physical participation in the Food Drive since I have been working as a Letter Carrier. Both times missed have been due to my daughter graduating college.

Food Drive Day is one of my most joyful days to be able to serve the community! I look forward to it every year and I am very passionate about it! Even though there's a lot of time, effort, and energy that goes into this volunteer program, I still find that it tugs at my heartstrings every time.



Hopefully, by the time this article goes to print, the total amount of food collected for our Branch will be available. (When you

have print deadlines and other people that you are waiting on to give you information... sometimes it doesn't flow together. Sometimes it does.)



Whatever the amount will be, I know that we can all put as much effort as possible to get the word out to the communities we serve that we Letter Carriers

really care! But, it all depends on the generosity of the people and the communities that we serve. Some people are generous, some people are not.

It might also come down to a Letter Carrier (whether it be a City Carrier or a Rural Carrier) delivering the postcards and the bags... I found out from customers in the Delano area that several of them did not receive a postcard at their place of residence. **THIS IS VERY DISTURBING NEWS TO ME.**

The postcards are pieces of mail that are to be delivered. They are not to be shoved aside, looked at like trash, or done with whatever the Carrier wants to do with them. **THEY ARE MAIL!! THEY ARE TO BE DELIVERED!!** I have received a list of street names that did not receive postcards out in the Delano area.

There also was a discrepancy on where the food in Delano had been going in the past. I spent a great deal of time on the phone one day after finding out that CAPK in Delano has never received food from us nor heard about the Food Drive.



With numerous churches in Delano, I spent time trying to find a church that would be willing and able to take the donated food. After one was located, I took a Sunday morning drive to meet with the pastor's wife at the church. She told me that they have been praying in their church congregation that they would be able to find some way to be able to give food to the community. And then I call her...

The church isn't large, but that does not mean it is not capable. And — after receiving all the food collected by the Delano Letter Carriers — they found that they did not have enough area for storage. I then found another Church that was also willing to help out with the distribution of food to the people in need in Delano.

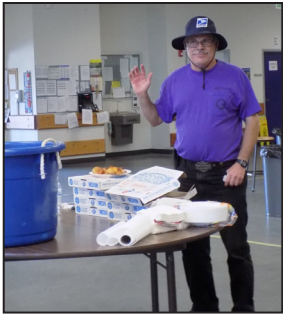
Another obstacle came up in Delano which should not have been one: Temporary management in charge that day would not release the food to the pastor. If the Carriers returned at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, there should be no reason why the church or organization could not pick up the food. The Food Drive is a National Association of Letter Carriers event! It is not a management event. Management does not get to decide where the food goes. The union does.

I'd like to point out that there were also certain neighborhoods in the Bakersfield area that did not receive any postcards either. **This is unacceptable!** The food drive is a Union function with the FULL support of the United States Postal Service Postmaster General Megan Brennan. Apparently, the backing of the PMG doesn't mean that much to certain members of management who chose not to be supportive.

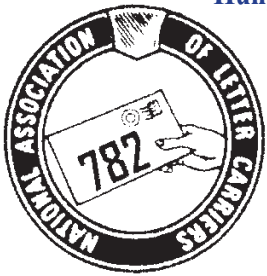
I'd also like to point out that there **are** a lot of management personnel where our Branch members work who do fully support the Food Drive. I'd like to send out a huge "Thank You!" to each of them! All and all, I want to thank EVERYONE for their time and efforts!!

NORMA HAMER

Branch 782 Associate Office Food Drive Coordinator



Thank you to all of the different organizations and volunteers who joined with us to make this 25th Annual "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive such a very special day!!!



COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP OF KERN
FOOD BANK
"Because no one should go hungry"



Continued on next page...





Thank you to every single one of you who made this day a success!!!

Minutes of the March 2016 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 26th day of April, 2017 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Frank Martinez. All members of the Executive Board were present. The Stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Edwards, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet; Assistant Recording Secretary Norma Hamer; Assistant Financial Secretary Marcie Rodriguez and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the March 28, 2017 meeting were read and accepted with the corrections of the meeting month to March not February.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: An application was received from Tami Johnson, Edwards.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Teresa Ortega reported that everything is good with the Picnic planning. Basil Zuniga reported that last month Stockdale Carriers folded the newsletter. Next month will be Camino Media's turn. Basil informed the members that the web version of the newsletter has a lot of information. He also informed veterans that the "Exchange" will open for internet shopping to veterans. Paul Greenfield reported that the Social and Recreation Committee will supply water to Carriers on Food Drive day. He also expressed his concerns that information is not getting posted in the offices; and, therefore the Carriers do not know what activities are available. Kim Gerdes reported that 26 books were sold this month thank you Basil. There are 663 books left. Dicie Wilder donated a certificate for a drawing for a pound of See's candy.

NEW BUSINESS: Members were made aware that 4 Carriers at EB/Brundage were given the "Million Mile" awards, Joy Cordova, Jessie Subia, Juan Rivera and Gloria Tabieros. Manager at the Downtown station denied a Carrier LWOP for FMLA. A grievance will be filed. Employees *are* allowed to use annual leave, LWOP or sick leave for approved FMLA. Shari Sharp met with the grocery union and they will be coming to the stations to help with the Food Drive. The Food Drive pins are here. All Stewards should take some to give the Carriers at their stations.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery asked that each convention delegate be sure to submit their leave slips and cancel any leave they will not be using. The cancelled leave should be posted at each office. There will be a meeting of the delegates following this meeting tonight. A Budget meeting will be held following the Steward meeting on May 3. Route 724 has been made a full route. Mike Towery reported that he and Mike Meza went to Edwards to meet regarding problems at the office. There is only one CCA in the office and one six hour route. Deven Patterson asked about the 3999's being done. Carriers are not receiving any information. Mike reported that Carriers should be

given a copy of the 1838. It was agreed at the Labor Management meeting the supervisors will give Carriers a copy of the 1838. Let your Steward know if you ask for and do not receive a copy. A discussion was held regarding safety issues. Hampers are damaged. Carriers are being told to take their parcels to their vehicles in APC's. APC's are not to be pushed on the blacktop. Carriers should fill out safety forms. Problems will not be fixed until forms are filled out and turned in to management. Basil Zuniga reported that John Ross passed away. He started in 1965 in Shafter; he served as Branch Vice-President, Recording Secretary. He also helped at all MDA functions and was the NALC Representative for EI (Employee Involvement). He passed away 10 days ago; he was buried on Saturday at the military cemetery. Mike Towery asked for a moment of silence in honor of John.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery asked if the CCA's attending the meeting tonight were getting 40 hours per week. In some offices the CCA's are only working 18 hours a week. CCA's can work at the AO's but management will need to approve it.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$13,897.44 was collected for the month of March.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar will report next month.

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Gabriel Trejillo. (\$21.50/\$21.50)

There was a drawing for a See's Candy certificate which was won by Norma Hamer.

The drawing for \$50.00 would have been won by Sarabjit Dhaliwal who was not present.

There were 48 members and 1 guest present. Basil Zuniga wanted to add how impressed he was that there were 48 members present when the drawing was for only \$50.00.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary



Welcome New Members!!

Tami Johnson, Edwards AFB

Non-Members — February 2017*

Downtown Station

Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz

South Station

Aloalii Maui Jr.

Brundage/East Bakersfield

Vicky Guerrero

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!!!

Mojave

Alexander Keller

Ridgecrest

G. D Schatz
Erik Bennand

Shafter

M. D. Voights
L. M. New

Taft

K. J. Hughes

Tehachapi

B. C. Den Beeman

Trona

100% UNION!!!

Wasco

100% UNION!!!

*CCA names are in italics

Frankly Speaking

On Thursday May 3rd, I attended a funeral service for retired Letter Carrier Bill Quinlan. I want to share a few memories.

I first met Bill at Bakersfield's Stockdale Station when I transferred to Bakersfield in September 1969 from Southern California where I had been a Clerk-Carrier.

Bill was one of the "Old Timers". His route was comprised of the area in Old Park Stockdale and the apartments on Stockdale Highway. It was a pretty affluent area and, as I recall, *every* house received every single magazine published and it was a lot of volume.

In December, at Christmas time, I was a sub and the supervisors assigned me to Bill. I was his "Christmas help".

The mail volume of both letters and parcels during Christmas in 1969 was totally different than now. The volume was so heavy that Bill would need to "fuse" his letter mail. (For those that do not know what mail fusing is, ask a real old timer.) My job was to come in after he had finished stuffing the case with as much volume as possible, and had pulled the route down with the fusing cards for eventual delivery. He would then case the remaining mail.

I would deliver the apartments on Stockdale Highway and all of his parcels. Whenever I delivered a parcel in Old Park Stockdale, I was asked,

In Memorium

Bill Quinlan

Bill Quinlan was born November 20, 1917, in St. Louis, MO and passed away April 26, 2017, in Fillmore, CA. He served as a US Navy Seabee during WWII stationed in the South Pacific. He returned to Bakersfield, CA where he was employed by the US Postal Service as a mail carrier for 30 years, while also helping in the family bee business. In his later years, he worked at the Rosedale Senior Center and as a crossing guard.

Bill was preceded in death by his wife Pauline of 56 years. He is survived by his 4 children

Charles, John, William and Ruth and their spouses; 10 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild.

Services were held on Thursday, May 4, 2017, at Hillcrest Memorial Park & Mortuary (Bakersfield) at 10:00 am.

Published in *Bakersfield Californian* on May 2, 2017



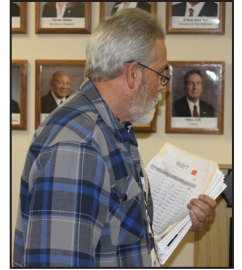
"Where's Bill?". His patrons loved him and he would help them any way he could. What impressed me most about Bill was the affection that his customers had for him. There are even stories about how, if customers were going to be on vacation, he would go water their lawns. He was all about "Service".

Bill also sold the most amazing honey, of which I bought several full mason jars. It was at his funeral service that his son explained that Bill and his son worked together to extract the honey and had it shipped all over the country. Bill retired around 1974 and I was told by his family that he had a very happy retirement. May we all!!

Rest in Peace, Bill. You've earned it.

FRANK THOMASY
Past NALC Branch 782 President

Our Union is successful because we band together to accomplish great things — with each of us doing just a little bit in the journey. Our Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is just one example. There are others...



You don't have to be a Shop Steward to show up and help fold, staple and place labels on the newsletters. It's not hard, and it can be a lot of fun doing this with folks who you normally just see at work. Bring your kids!! And?? We have pizza, too...

Maybe you can come to one of the monthly Union meetings... Learn something. Maybe win some money. Have a cookie! Invest some time for a better future.



Just got out of the hospital again! I was there for five days with a tear in my esophagus.



I don't even know how that happened. I had blood coming out as vomit and BMs. I took in 7 units of blood and am now on a liquid diet. Lots of Ensure, Jello and Gatorade.

Sorry we didn't let you know but there was a lot going on all at once. Two days in emergency. I didn't think it was a big deal until my primary care doctor sent me to San Joaquin Hospital in an ambulance.

I guess that's what happens as we get old. I'm doing better now but I'm on a bunch of meds just trying to heal up.

FRED ACEDO
Back here from out there...

Anita
Holderman Pix

It's the Postal SERVICE!

by Michael Nitz, Trustee
NALC Branch 2

Last week I had the privilege of taking a new CCA out for a day of training. I noticed that he was really fast delivering the parcels. After a few stops I asked him if the customer was home and he replied he didn't know. He said he put the parcel down, rang the doorbell, and came back to the truck. Throughout the remainder of the week, I asked the other CCA's in the office how they handle parcel delivery, including Amazon Sunday delivery, and found out that this is common practice.

The responses by the CCA's really have me concerned. Are we not doing enough to ensure that the future mail carriers are aware that we are providing a service to our customers? Sure we all tell them when they deliver something in the wrong spot, or maybe they put mail in a vacant box. It's easy to talk about the mistakes. But are we telling them that it is OK to interact with the people on the routes?

Think about it this way, when you go to a restaurant and have a bad server, you notice that right? Some people even have servers that they request when they go out because of the exceptional service provided. It makes a huge difference. Let's say you go try a new restaurant in town. On the menu is that steak you have had a craving for all week long. The server comes over, drops the plate on the table, and walks away. Wouldn't you think that a bit rude? If someone asks you how the new restaurant was, I would bet you would describe the crummy service.

In this atmosphere going forward, and with the all the challenges the Postal Service will face in the future, the last thing we want is to be known for is bad service. It would be a terrible shame if a customer were to not ship with us because of bad service on the carrier level.

In order to ensure that we provide excellent customer service now and in the future everyone needs to be reminded of the proper way to deliver a parcel. The M-41 Section 323.3 it titled *Parcel Post* and it states:

Many parcels may be carried with the relays. If no one is available to receive a parcel that is too large for the mail receptacle or parcel locker (when available), follow the procedures in 322.311 and 322.312.

For heavy parcels, the following systems may be used:

a. Begin the loop at the point of the parcel delivery.

"Out tHeRe"



b. Bypass the stop until the loop is complete, then drive to the delivery point with both the mail and the parcel.

c. If a parcel is heavy, will not fit into your satchel, or requires a signed receipt, determine if someone is available at the address by ringing the doorbell or knocking on the door at the time of delivery of the rest of the mail. If no answer, follow the procedures in 322.311 and 322.312. If someone is available to receive the parcel, return with it after completing the loop.

The M-39 Section 322.312.b. states:

When someone is not usually available to receive parcels. If no one is available to receive the parcel and the carrier knows that someone at the address is not usually available to receive parcels, complete and leave Form 3849 (see exhibit 322.312b) after the first attempt. When the carrier does not know if someone is usually available to receive parcels, Form 3849 should be left after the first attempt. Endorse the parcel near the address, showing the reason for nondelivery, e.g., "No Response", date delivery was attempted, and the carrier's initials and route number. Upon returning to the office, deposit the parcel in the designated place for undelivered parcels.

As you can see by the instructions in the M-39 all carriers are required to deliver the parcel to the customer not simply to the address. This job can be incredibly rewarding. There's nothing like seeing someone excited to get a parcel that they've been waiting for. So make sure that you deliver the parcel directly to the customer. You will get to know your customers and your customers will love the excellent service that you provide!

Article courtesy of the May 2017 West Allis, Wisconsin
NALC Branch 2 Pioneer

2017 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



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

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

NALC Health Benefit Plan Members:

The NALC Health Benefit Plan does not cover "Dental" except in cases of accidental injury to teeth. See plan brochure for coverage.

But we do have a Dental Discount Program!

Members covered under the NALC HIGH OPTION PLAN must enroll BY PHONE ONLY! The member must call 1-877-521-0244. The cost is \$3.75 per month for "Self Only" \$5.50 per month for "self and family". The savings/discount is around 25%.

Once you have enrolled in Dental Discount Program, you will log on to www.CignaPlussavings.com. On this site (in the right corner), it will show "FIND A DENTIST". Type in your city and zip code, and select a dentist. Or print the page/pages and call the dentist you have selected to make sure they are accepting new patients and that they are STILL ENROLLED in the CignaPlus savings dental program.

Preventive Care Children/Adults Available (See Brochure) Prevents Serious Illnesses, Flu, Tetanus, Pneumonia, and Shingles. Many immunizations are Free (Adult/Child) when administered at a PPO pharmacy/facility. Some will require a prescription from the Doctor.

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

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

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

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

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

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

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



A Mark Ramirez Viewpoint!!

Let Congress Know They Work for US...

Middle class jobs will continue to disappear in the United States as a result of the super wealthy corporations in America making \$\$\$ BILLIONS of dollars in profits and the way in which wages for workers in our country continue to decline.

Through the 1940's and 50's corporations were taxed at a higher rate. This helped pay for highways, bridges, college tuitions, government jobs, etc. The middle class could afford to attend college, allowing for better employment and the ability to raise a family, purchase a home, buy a car, and live a comfortable life. College students now are currently burdened with \$\$\$ thousands of dollars in student debt — and have less chance to find a good paying job, because these jobs are just not available. Unions were responsible for bargaining for better wages and working conditions rights and a say in the work environment. These bargaining rights also allowed other American workers to request the same benefits that unionized workers had.

Today in our country, corporations are realizing huge increases in productivity but workers' wages have stayed flat. The more these corporations make, the more power in politics they have; and the more leverage the accumulate, the more clout they will use to keep their place at the top of this pyramid of wealth.

These rich corporations wield even more power — thanks to our U.S. Supreme Court's flip-flop ruling on CITIZENS UNITED. The ruling has allowed wealthy corporation to leverage their political clout to influence our U.S. Congress to enact changes in legislation and laws that are there to protect our citizens. These corporations want to make changes that benefit them and NOT the citizens of our nation. With unlimited money to buy influence, these rich and powerful corporations render the middle class in this country neutral and unable to compete with this immense wealth in the political arena.

You have probably heard this: “**ENTITLEMENTS that U.S. citizens receive are not sustainable.**” YET, it is the TAXES from the middle class that pay for “BENEFITS” like Social Security, Medicare, unemployment and many more. They are **NOT** free entitlements. Tax payers — you and me — fund these needed programs for the elderly, young, and poor in our country!!!!

Hundreds of corporate lobbyists are in Washington D.C to purchase power and control over our U.S Congress at the expense of the working class in this country. All you have to do is read the paper or watch the news to see what is happening in our nation.

Our own NALC has a “Letter Carrier Political Fund”. **Each Letter Carrier should be contributing to the fund on a monthly basis!** The money generated by us working in union allows our union leadership to speak to Congress on behalf of our union members in order to provide useful information to Congress on how to keep the U.S. Postal Service a strong public service for many years to come. It is a fact. To speak to those in Congress, it takes MONEY, MONEY, AND MORE MONEY.

Employment with the U.S. Postal Service is a good middle class job. But, things can change faster than one might think. The percentage of unionized labor in this country has fallen substantially since 2016 and *WE* are on a small island as unionized workers...

As unionized labor, are at the mercy of Congress and the individuals *WE* elect to SERVE the citizens of our nation. They **MUST** work for **US** and **NOT** themselves!! Huge sums of money and corruption go hand-in-hand. If we, as citizens and voters, want a better life for ourselves and our families, we **MUST** get involved to enact important changes in our elections.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! Tell Congress what you, as a tax payer, expect of them. *Call or write your Congress member and let them know who they work for!*

MARK RAMIREZ
Retired Letter Carrier

NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative



As a member of the NALC, there are several easy ways to give to the Letter Carrier Political Fund:

Payroll deduction: Contribute automatically, using PostalEase (either online or by phone) to set up an allotment deduction from your USPS paycheck.

Direct bank withdrawal: You can authorize the fund to withdraw a monthly electronic contribution directly from your personal checking account

Annuity deduction: Retired Letter Carriers can elect to give monthly via an automatic deduction from your monthly annuity.

Congratulations Charles Gomez!



Charles' last BT...



Charles joins the Last Punch Bunch!

When Charles Gomez began his City Carrier career on June 22, 1985, he already had some delivery experience because he had been a Rural Carrier Relief in Delano, California for three months.

Letter Carriers who work in cities where there are multiple delivery units become used to seeing different faces on a fairly constant basis. A ripple effect takes place when someone bids a route at a different station. They leave and they are replaced by a person who is either a successful bidder for that route or by someone who has been assigned to the job because no one wanted it. Sometimes, people who bid out will bid back in. Additionally, new hires seem to always be coming and going.

It's wasn't like that for Charles as he worked — **for thirty-two years** — delivering mail to 93215 customers. The building where he worked in Delano is *the* USPS. He saw the same faces for years!! He was there when they left and saw others he'd worked with merely move to a different case.

You can see that it brings a smile to his face as he discusses the fact that he is now able to call himself a retired Letter Carrier. And? **He has a t-shirt to prove it!**

Charles was hired during a window when there were multiple vacancies in Delano. These four people were hired in quick succession with him in a short time span: Ernie Gutierrez, Jesse Mariano, Reynaldo Limos and Ruben Hernandez. Ernie is the senior Delano Letter Carrier and Jessie now takes Charles' place as Number 2.

Charles fondly remembers some of the old-timers who were around when he first started out. Part of his reason is that he learned a lot from many of them. The other part is just as important...

(Remember, the only way to become a Regular is when there is a vacancy. Because there was often such a long a wait to make Regular, junior people were usually *really* happy to see the faces of those senior Carriers walk out the door!)

Delano Seniority List 3/31/17

Ernest Gutierrez	12/10/1984
Charles Gomez	06/22/1985
Jessie Mariano	08/18/1985
Cynthia Quebral	05/06/2000
Martin Juarez	05/13/2006
Arnulfo Reyes-Rios	11/06/2010
Blanca Ibarra	11/29/2014
Daniela Barreto	12/17/2014
Thalia Castaneda	12/27/2014

Some of the "old-timers" that Charles remembers were Juan "Iron Man" Lopez (who earned the nickname by never calling in sick and who retired with over 3000 hours of sick leave), Armando Jimenez, Ralph Escalante, Bernardo Calantes, James Griffith, Delio "Junior" Isham, Octavio "Tãão" Moreno, Edwin Balbas, and Rudy Rivera.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Charles was a Reserve Deputy with the Kern County Sheriff Department in McFarland. One day, he drove his future wife, Debra, to take an employment test at Bakersfield's West High school in 1982. While waiting for her in the parking lot, he noticed a Letter Carrier in a USPS jeep making deliveries on New Stine and he thought that it looked like a pretty cool job to have.

In 1985, Rudy Rivera mentioned to Charles that there was a possible job as a Rural Carrier. On March 21, he was hired,

showed up to work, and he liked it. Three months later, Postmaster Joe Riojas called him into the office and told him that he was hiring some PTFs and wanted to know if Charles wanted to become a Clerk-Carrier.

The Rural Carrier, Earl Conley, had been telling Charles that he was going to retire, but that day never came. If Earl had retired, Charles could have taken over his route. So, Charles wasn't sure when he might become full-time and (as a Rural Relief) he only worked when the Regular couldn't. He wasn't making very much money and he wanted something more secure that he could plan around.

The offer by Joe Riojas was intriguing.

So, three months after he became a Rural Relief, he was looking at a different case which was set up differently and he was working out of a postal jeep instead of his own privately owned vehicle.

As a Clerk-Carrier, Charles would do the morning dispatches as they were trucked into Delano and he would distribute mail to all of the cases. He worked hand cases and had other duties (like collections) in addition to delivering.

And he also had this to say, "I HATED doing collections! I would help out on the street, and when done I would be sent home and told to come back at 4:00. I would empty out all the collection boxes in Delano, return, wait for the truck, close out, lock up the building, and go home."



Ernie Gutierrez, Charles Gomez and Martin Juarez

Charles was a T-6 for eighteen years and had the following city routes on his string: 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11. He recalls days when he would case multiple routes, carry one route and go help out others who were delivering on his string. He remembers that sometimes Alex Grijalva would ask him to carry on routes which were not on his string. Sometimes he would. Sometimes he wouldn't.

When asked about dogs, Charles said that he only suffered one dog bite in his career. He had no idea that a dog was even there and he had no chance to react as it bit him on the back of his ankle. Supervisor Richard Rodriguez picked him up and took him to the hospital. And? *It wasn't his fault!!!*

But that doesn't mean that he didn't have any other run-ins with dogs. He remembers that once, "Out of the corner of my eye, I sensed something. When I looked to see what it was, I saw a pit bull. It was just staring at me. I slowly backed up until I noticed that it was starting to run at me. I was close enough to the gate that I was able to turn, quickly run three steps and slam the gate behind me!"

Charles shared that he always tried to do his best as a Carrier. A number of supervisors that he knew through the years were a little sparing in their praise for the jobs that were done by the Carriers. However, even Georgette Streiff, David Vance and Roy Bonilla pointed out that Charles did really well at both casing and carrying.

In 2013, Charles began to notice that he was having pain in his knee. He just worked through the pain which would occasionally flare up but he wondered if this was the onset of something.

When Route 11 became vacant in 2014 because Ruben Hernandez retired, Charles bid the assignment. It was pretty much all NDCBUs. And, although it had some 1300 deliveries, they went off pretty quickly. As time went on, the parcels volume started to really spike. He went from delivering about 15 - 20 parcels a day to an average of 60 - 70 a day. One day, he received 125 parcels for delivery!

He was able to deliver the route for some time; but, by 2016, he knew that his in-

jured knee was making it more difficult to carry out his duties.

In June, an evaluation at an urgent care confirmed that the knee was going to force a change in his work routine. Initially, he was given five days off to heal. His family doctor later recommended that he take five more days off to see if it would alleviate some of the pain. A subsequent orthopedic assessment and diagnosis resulted in a suggestion of modified duty.

Because the problem with his knee was certified by the doctor to be work-related, Charles was returned to work with Limited Duty restrictions and cased mail instead of going out to the street.

Without a doubt, Charles wishes that he would have been able finish out his career in better health. If his knee hadn't become a problem, he would have. But, he now (in retirement) notes that things are much better. He walks for exercise and has discovered that his knee doesn't hurt as much as it used to. That is a great thing!



Although Charles is a nice guy, no one knew if he would share a piece of cake...

A number of years before Charles made a decision to retire, *he made the decision to be ready to retire.*

He worked hard to be ready!

He has advice for anyone who is getting close to the point in their career where they might even be thinking about retiring: *"Take take a really close look at your finances."*

Being debt free is probably the single most important thing that will make retirement not only possible but also make it more enjoyable! *"Although it may take a long period of time — even years — you can't afford not to get out of debt!"*

When Charles was asked about any possible plans that he might have for his upcoming years of retirement, he raised the possibility of some adventure.

He shared that Debra and he had been to Hawaii in 1986 on their honeymoon. They returned to celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary when daughters, Sondra and Stacy were teenagers. The second time cost *a lot more.* (You need to ask Charles...)

Maybe — if Charles and Debra make a return trip to Hawaii — they'll spend less and enjoy it more?



The "Delano Gang" on Charles Gomez's last day — March 31, 2017

(l-r) front row — Bianca Caballero, Cynthia DeLeon, Anthony Talosig, Arnie Reyes, Cynthia Quebral, Daniela Barreto, Charles Gomez, Blanca Ibarra, Lester Molina, (kneeling up front), Thalia Castaneda, Martin Juarez, Ernie Gutierrez, Stephanie Phillips, and Linda Pennington (Photos courtesy of Postmaster Erica Tovar)

Welcome New Member!!

NALC Branch 782 Vice-President John Ortega pictured in March as he initiates Adela Carrasco into membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers.



Moving forward, it should be noted that Adela will see **Out There** cartoons by Fred Acedo in the newsletter.

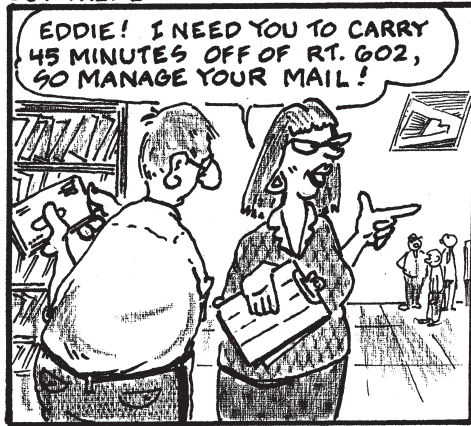
If she hangs in there long enough, they will also become the world *she* lives in...

Out There



Adela, you never know... You might even find yourself in the "funny pages" some day courtesy of Fred. It could happen. Yes. It could.

OUT THERE



Have an Idea for Fred?*

Fred Acedo
Br. 782 S.A.N.E.
P.O. Box 6532
Bakersfield, CA
93386-6532

* You never know what you might get...

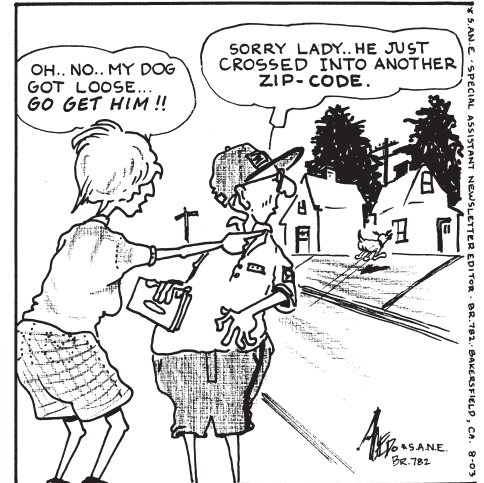
OUT THERE



"Out There"



OUT THERE





Congratulations to the newest members of the "Million Mile Club"!!

On Thursday, April 20, 2017 Bakersfield Postmaster Lynda LaForce honored five East (93305) and Brundage (93307) Letter Carriers with National Safety Council "Million Mile Club" plaques — this is the USPS Safe Driver award.

The recipients were Jessie Subia (Seniority Date 7/19/84 and assigned to Route 718); Frank Martinez (Seniority Date 7/24/1978 and assigned to Route 515); Joy Cordova (Seniority Date 11/9/1985 and assigned to Route 512); Gloria Taberos (Seniority Date 5/13/85 and assigned to Route 712); and, Juan Rivera (Seniority Date 9/28/85 and assigned to Route 519).

These employees earned entrance into this club for thirty-plus years of continuous accident-free service on their routes!



When asked, Juan Rivera attributes his superb safety record to always being vigilant of his surroundings while on his route and inspecting his mirrors daily.

As an On-the-Job Instructor (OJI), Joy Cordova ensures that all new employees she trains have the proper foundation to one day join her in the Million Mile Club as well. Her continuous commitment to safety is an inspiration to all USPS employees.

Congratulations to each of the recipients of this very special award! Most importantly, this is one very important milestone on the road to becoming — one day — a healthy, *RETIRED* Letter Carrier!! One day, you may also see an award on a wall in your home, too!

Safely Yours,
PAUL GREENFIELD
93307 USPS Safety Captain



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

This month YOU could win \$100!

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



\$500?
Yup!

Membership doesn't cost... it pays!!

John Ross was a True Friend!

While I was standing in line trying to figure out what to do on my very first day, a man came in and punched his time card. As I was introduced to each of the seven Carriers at Shafter, I was told that the man's name was John. I called him John because that is what everybody else at the post office called him.

I didn't find out until much later that he was known as "Ed" to his family and friends who were not in the post office.

It saddens me to tell you that, last month, Branch 782 lost John Edward Ross. He was a mentor to me and to many other members.

Thinking about John, I remember something about that first day staring at the case trying to figure out where each letter was supposed to go: *The Aroma of Pipe Tobacco*.

John's case was close by and he was a pipe smoker. In fact, the routine every morning that we clocked on and checked

our vehicles (jeeps) would include John lighting his pipe. (If you've been around long enough, you may even remember that there used to be little metal ashtrays that Carriers would clip on to the cases so that they could smoke while they cased.)

Also, as in every office in the country where there are Letter Carriers, each morning in Shafter usually started out with talk about the baseball/football/basketball games from the night before or what had been on television. They were good days.

And, John could talk sports!

During baseball season, John was an umpire and, sometimes, he would take some annual leave to be able to work games. (As a sub, that was pretty cool because I got to work. And, John always made sure that he set the mail up so that it would be easy to deliver and that his customers would get the best service!)

One good thing about a small office is that we all covered each other when things happened.

the Shafter Shop Steward. He explained that he wanted to become more active on the Branch 782 Executive Board and that he would be attending more meetings in Bakersfield.

Because I didn't know anything since I'd only been on the job for three months, I told John that I probably shouldn't. He responded with, "Don't worry. I'll help you every step of the way and if you ever need me, I'll be there."

One day, he took me to a union meeting in Bakersfield and introduced me to Branch 782 President Paul Alexander. While there, he signed me up as a union member and began his work as my mentor.

Because John was so much a part of the work that the Letter Carriers did for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the MDA Telethon, I found myself becoming very involved with that, too.

I have other memories of John as the Santa Claus at many of the family Christmas parties that the Branch used to sponsor. He used to sit there, patiently listening to all of the kids up on his lap as they told him which presents they were hoping to receive. I'm sure that there are probably pictures of him with some of the kids. He always had a big smile on his face as he did his "Santa duty"!

As the Shafter Shop Steward, I would occasionally have problems with management and I would tell John what they were asking for. He explained to me that — during meetings — I was on equal footing with management. I didn't have to agree to whatever they wanted just because they were "the boss".

Management caught on to the fact that John was coaching me on my Steward Rights. So, they told me that I couldn't talk to him on the workroom floor.

Well, John had some tricks up his sleeves. He "suggested" that I tell management, "Give me a day or two and I'll get back to you on this."

John would then have all of the Carriers meet at Spencers to talk about the situation and come up with the best way to get all of



So, who were the "Shafter Gang" in the early 1980s?

(l-r) front row — Hermie Encina, John Ross, Tanya Woods; second row — Elden Eckels, Mandi Bird, George White, George Vallavazo; back row — Les Armstrong, Jerry Patterson, Kino Gonzalez, Peter Cobb and Larry Dimas

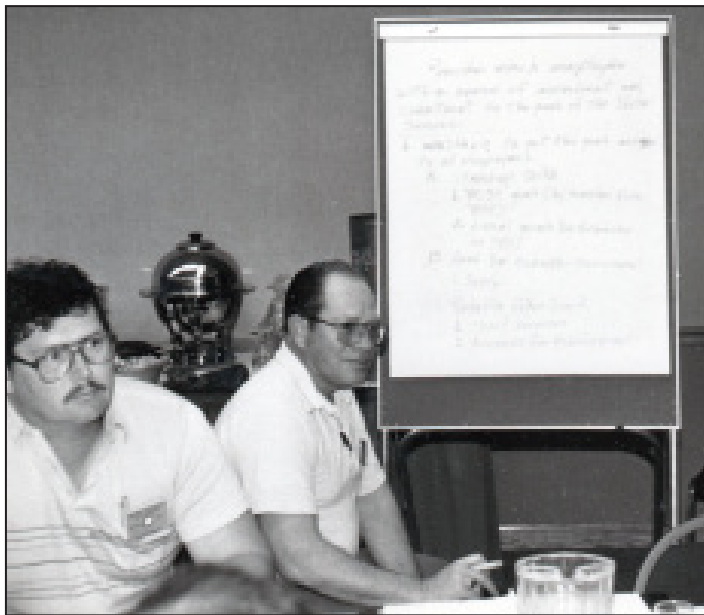
I soon discovered that John was the Shop Steward at our office. He knew the Contract and he always dealt with management with a fair hand.

When I made it through my 90 day probation, John came to me asked if I would consider being

the Carriers a solution that would uphold the Contract. By doing this, he showed me that the best defense that we have is when all the Carriers work together as a group!

He also showed me that it was important for me to learn how to stand my ground. Through the years, what he taught me was put to use many times. Some managers were easy to work with and others seemed to want to fight about everything.

In the late 1980s, John took on a new role for the Branch. He was assigned as the Union EI/QWL Facilitator.



John Ross — in the center of this picture — really believed in the potential of EI/QWL to solve problems in the USPS and to give Letter Carriers a voice in being part of “The Solution” for our mutual benefit!

(At that time, the NALC and the USPS established Employee Involvement/Quality of Work Life to resolve problems which each unit might have. A USPS management person and an NALC person worked as a team and facilitated local meetings which were held on the clock.) Because of this, he was no longer a full-time Shafter Carrier. He and his partner would travel all over what was then called a Management Sectional Center to cities and units in the 932 and 933 zip codes.)

I don't remember if John ever came back to Shafter as a Carrier. But, he was definitely missed. In fact, I think that John probably retired as an E.I. facilitator.

As the years have gone by, Carriers have asked, “Do you still see John?”

I would explain that I didn't see him very often but that I'd heard that he was working at a golf course. (If you knew John, you knew that golf is something that he really, really enjoyed!)

When I was delivering, I would sometimes see his wife, Mary, and ask how he was. She would tell me that he was doing good and that he was busy with the grandkids.

Eventually, I saw John at a Branch 782 Retiree Dinner and found out that he'd had a knee operation and was using a cane to get around. And? ***I found out that he'd stopped smoking that pipe!***

I was shocked when Kino Gonzales called me and asked, “Did you read the paper? Is Edward John Ross ‘the John Ross’ who worked with us?”

John was a man who lived out his faith. He was a friend who would help you do anything that it was in his power to help you out with.

People who knew him are going to miss his smile and his firm handshake as he greeted you. John's word was his bond, and he was a true friend who will not be forgotten.

JERRY PATTERSON
Retired Shafter Letter Carrier



Recently we lost two retired Letter Carriers: Jesse Avalos and John Ed Ross. Both Jesse and John were very involved with the Letter Carrier Union, specifically, our local Branch 782. When I first became involved, Jesse and John were Branch Officers. I remember Jesse being very involved in our Branch Picnic in both cooking and serving. Eventually, Jesse went on to transfer to work in building construction and repair. I believe he even got his contractors license.

John Ross (I always knew him as John) was also always involved in the Union. He was the Vice President when I first became President, but he gave up his position to become our first Employee Involvement (E.I.) Facilitator. Being a Facilitator was a position that John was a natural for. His ability to help management and Carriers work through problems made him a perfect fit! You can still see a legacy of his accomplishments with the vehicle screens at our Station “A” or mats that Carriers use at their cases.

John was such a giving person and really loved the members' children. I fondly remember him at our Branch Christmas parties when he played Santa Claus. John was a personal friend and mentor and will be gravely missed!

FRANK THOMASY
Former NALC Branch 782 President



John Ross makes an announcement that Santa Claus has been spotted nearby...



“Captured” here in this old black-and-white picture taken in the late 1970s is a group of the Branch 782 members who were active at the time: Leo Walker (Branch 782 President); Tony Chavez, Vice-President; Paul Alexander, Chief Steward; John Ross, Recording Secretary; and Mely Villagomez, Treasurer. [Although there were color photographs available, they cost a little more to process. No, we didn’t use stone tablets. But, this scene *was* a long time ago...]

For years, John Ross was involved with everything that represented Carriers and the Union. He always had a positive approach and input in all of my dealings with him. And, no matter how serious the conversation was, John always had a smile on his face.

My memories of John go way back to the MDA Telethons that we were so involved with as a Union. He and I were joined by our wives (Mary and Peggy) and other Branch 782 officers like Tony Chavez and his wife, Bertha. Together with other Branch 782 members like Mark Ramirez, Margaret Romero, Bill Curtis, Basil Zuniga and many others, we answered MDA phones, worked the MDA “mailroom” and did many, many other things for “Jerry’s Kids”.

Through the years, we were delegates to state and national NALC conventions. We also attended seminars and other meetings

in different locations all over the country. It’s interesting how remembering things about John also give me a chance to remember others who also used to be a part of the life of our union. I remember Leo Walker, John Wonderly, Oscar Maclin, Mely Villagomez and others. Many of them are gone now, but they were an important part of what we all did.



Another black-and-white picture, records Branch 782’s involvement in another MDA Telethon in the 1980s. (l-r) Robin Mangrin (television personality), Basil Zuniga, Paul Alexander, Cathy Thompson and John Ross as we made a donation to help out Jerry’s Kids.

Basil asked me to try to remember any specific things that make me smile. Here are a couple of memories.

One year, delegates were at the San Francisco airport waiting for our plane to travel to Portland, Oregon for a national conven-

tion. John and Mary Ross and my wife, Peggy, and I were sitting together. Mary looked up and said, “Oh, my, *that’s* Pat Boone!” I — of course — didn’t think that it was and I said, “If that’s Pat Boone, I’ll buy dinner for everybody tonight.”

Well, Mary got Pat Boone’s autograph and she also had dinner on me!



John Ross and I during a trip to Atlantic City, New Jersey to attend an NALC Health Benefits Training Seminar. And, yes, it is another of those old black-and-white pictures...

I remember one other occasion. We were at an NALC Health Benefits Seminar in Las Vegas and John and Mary Ross and Peggy were all singing the words to music of the 50’s and 60’s that we were listening to. (We all knew the words to the oldies before they became the oldies. But, because they knew me and had heard my musical abilities, they didn’t ask me to sing.)

If I took more time to remember things, I might. But, as I’ve aged, my memory isn’t what it used to be. So this is it for now.

PAUL ALEXANDER
NALC Branch 782 Past President

John's "#\$%& PIPE"

I am saddened to hear of the passing of John Ross.

I have been involved with the Letter Carriers Union for over thirty-nine years. When I started as a PTF Carrier in Lamont, John was Shop Steward in Shafter.

John served our Branch in many different capacities: Shop Steward, Branch Secretary, and Branch Vice-President. He was an inspiration in how we should become involved with the rest of the NALC in helping "Jerry's Kids" through supporting the Muscular Dystrophy Association



John Ross, Frank Thomasy and I were priveleged to carry the wheel chair of the National MDA Poster Child off the dais following his appearance before the NALC National Convention.

John Ross was the Branch 782 NALC Health Benefit Representative before I was. He set the bar pretty high for how I felt I should serve our members in that capacity!

I will always remember John and his "Pipe"! *Like American Express....he never left home without it.*

Actually, that brings to mind a specific memory about one occasion which involved John's "#\$%& Pipe" when Basil Zuniga,

John Ross, myself, and a few other union members traveled to Palm Springs for a union conference.

"Night Owl" Basil Zuniga, John Ross and I (Mark Ramirez) shared a room. *WOW, WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!*

John woke me up two times with his snoring!! Basil woke me up typing on the Branch Mac computer at 2:30 am!! And? The rattling refrigerator in the room woke me up at 4 AM. Despite that, John and I were up at 5 AM to play golf at 6:30 AM. It had to have been 33 degrees outside!!!

John was alone in his golf cart and I was a passenger in the other cart which was driven by a not-to-be-named Branch 782 member. *NONE OF THE CARTS HAD WINDSHIELDS...AND IT WAS VERY, VERY COLD!!!* (With the wind chill, it must have been 30 degrees.)

As the passenger, I had my hands in my pockets to keep them warm as we headed for the green. I remember John shouting, "I lost my pipe!" as he turned his cart around. Without a warning of any kind, the driver of my cart made a sharp left turn to follow John and — without any seat belt — I flew out of the golf cart, hands stuck in my pockets, and I went cartwheeling end-over-end down the hill!

After what felt like a slow-motion, almost cartoon-like tumble — I laid there on my back, hands still in my pockets, spitting grass out of my mouth as John drives up with "The Pipe" that he'd found and asks if I was alright.

Since it was Palm Springs, it did eventually warm up to 80 degrees. But, the front 9 holes were freezing!

I think I was glad John found his "#\$%& "PIPE".

"REST IN PEACE UNION BROTHER JOHN!"

MARK RAMIREZ
Retired Letter Carrier
Branch 782 NALC Health Benefit Representative



(l-r) Bonnie Smith, Mark Ramirez, John Ross, Peggy Alexander (who did not want to get her picture taken), Paul Alexander and Mary Ross in a picture taken during the 1986 MDA Telethon at the Kern County Fairgrounds. Some of you may notice in the pictures on this page that Mark used to have hair. Believe it or not — whether you believe it or not — you may find yourself in a similar situation in years to come when you look back through old pictures and see that time has also brought about some changes in the way that you look, too. Really? Yes, Really.

I first met John Edward Ross when I was a supervisor in Stockdale station. John was the E. I. representative for the NALC (the Letter Carrier union). He would come to the station with his management counterpart for meetings and would greet the Carriers. Everyone seemed to know and like him.

John and his management partner had the job of trying to get management and employees to trust one another by working on different projects for the station. This was hard on management because they had goals to meet; and, Carriers had routes to carry.

Sometimes John and his partner were successful. Sometimes not. But, John never gave up. He got along well with both sides.

When Art Ornelas became Postmaster of Bakersfield, he assigned me as John's new E.I. management "partner". I then got to know him better. He knew all the ins-and-outs of the job. I learned a lot from him! I also got to know more Letter Carriers, supervisors, postmasters and many more people. It seemed that John knew *everybody* around the MSC from Visalia to Taft or Wasco to Arvin.

Every day we traveled to different towns, trying to help each place with their problems. Sometimes we

went to help cool down some hot spots between employees and management. John was always calm, reasonable and willing to work toward a solution that would meet the needs of everyone.



John Ross knew where the good places were to eat in each town we travelled to. Yes he did.

John was also knowledgeable about agriculture. Everywhere we went, he could tell what plants were in the fields.

He also knew where the good places were to eat in each town. Yup, I had a good time with John.

I hope to see him again, God willing.

HOMER RUIZ, JR.
USPS Retiree



John Ross, President Frank Thomasy and VP Mike Towery



In the above picture, (l-r) Bill Curtis, Mark Ramirez, Mike Towery, Frank Thomasy, John Ross and Tony Chavez are shown presiding at an NALC Branch 782 general meeting.



In the picture to the left, (l-r) Ralphie Ochoa, Steve "Fuzzy" Munoz, Tony Chavez, Bill Curtis, Ernie Gutierrez, NBA Tom Young, Paul Hernandez and John Ross taking their oaths of office as Tom Young inducts them as the Officers of NALC Branch 782.

Editor-guy note: These pictures were taken in the 1980s before Branch 782 purchased the building where we now have our general meetings. We used to convene at the Veterans' Hall on Mount Vernon Avenue and only had a small 70 square foot office.

John Ross was passionate about helping Jerry's Kids!



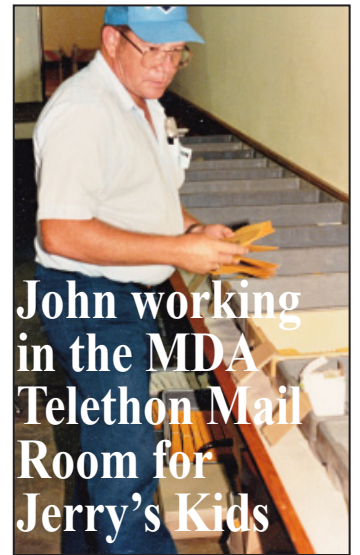
(l-r) Jesse Avalos, John Ross, John Wonderly, Randy Sparks, Tony Chavez and George White (& maybe Debbie Gaona's head?) during an Executive Board meeting. For context: Branch 782 "moved up" and rented another small (600 square feet) office in the St. Clair Building on Chester Avenue in the 1980s. This was followed by a succession of larger and larger work areas until Branch President Mike Towery coordinated the purchase of our own building at 2628 F Street in the 1990's. *These* folks were the foundation of that move.



(l-r) Mary Ross, Dicie Wilder, Tony Chavez, John Ross, Paul Alexander and Cathy Thompson in the 1980s.



(l-r) Taking phone pledges during a 1980s MDA Telethon at the Fair Grounds were — Front row: Basil Zuniga, John Ross, Paul Alexander, Cathy Thompson. Row 2: Mario Muniz, Danny Blair, Ron Gross, Connie Crimmins, Mark Ramirez. Row 3: Paul McCarthy, Gail Benner, Paul Hernandez, Debbie Gaona and Silver Farr.



John working in the MDA Telethon Mail Room for Jerry's Kids

Perhaps unbeknownst to folks in his church family, John was a staunch Union Activist!



John addressing delegates at a California State Association Convention.



John pickets in support of striking Union members during a National Convention.



In the picture to the left are: (r-l) John Ross, Mark Ramirez, NALC President Vincent Sombrotto, Basil Zuniga, and Margaret Romero at the NALC Centennial National Convention in 1989.



John Ross & Frank Thomasy hope to be "bailed out" by donations at another MDA Telethon.



Although it wasn't the reason they were there, Ralphie Ochoa, John Ross and Paul Alexander are pictured enjoying the food that was provided to all of the volunteers who showed up to help out at MDA Telethons!



(l-r) Tony Chavez, Peggy Alexander Mary Ross, John Ross, Margaret Romero & pledge cards.



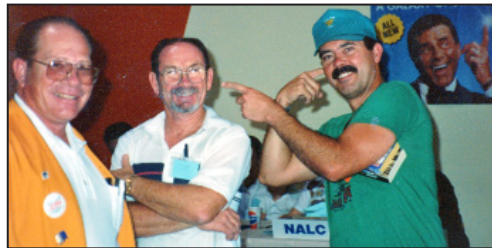
John Ross waiting for his turn at an MDA Bowl-a-Thon.

John Ross was one of the guys in the front of the room when we had Branch meetings. He was there when I joined the union in 1980.

Not until after I became a Branch 782 officer — and I was one of the guys in the front of the room — did I understand some of the time consuming work that he and the other Executive Board members & Shop Stewards did on their own time, after work, because they were all Letter Carriers, just like us. The difference is, all of the time & work that John & the others did behind the scenes. He was always there, at meetings & Branch functions like the rest of the union officials.



Our Branch used to sponsor family Christmas parties. I don't know why we don't do them anymore. They were a lot of fun and all of the kids and their parents had a great time. Every year, Santa showed up to make sure that each of the kids got to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. I have a picture which was taken in 1992. That picture shows my then-young daughters, Tanya and Shanon, sitting on Santa's lap while one of his "reindeers" looks on.



John Ross, Paul Alexander and serious Bill Curtis



(l-r) Gilbert Chavez, Richard Suniga, Frank Thomasy, NBA Tom Young, President Paul Alexander, John Ross and Tony Chavez at a Branch 782 General Meeting in the early 1980s General Meeting at the Mt. Vernon Veterans Hall.

Oh. The Santa? John Ross! And he did this for years!

I did not get to know him that well, but I do remember... he was *always* there when we needed him.

BILL CURTIS
Retired Carrier

a little more from the editor-guy

There is a line attributed to St. Francis that he may or may not have said. However, I think that John Ross would have understood it well... ***“Preach the Gospel. When all else fails, use words.”***

In the postal world, discussions of religion are pretty much taboo. And, in the setting of the work world this is as it should be. However — to me — it seems that John lived out this St. Francis maxim pretty effectively.

To the best of my recollection, John never uttered an unkind word about anyone. He may have had disagreements or disputes with managers or supervisors; and, he was always an advocate for the Letter Carriers he served, but he was invariably gentlemanly, level-headed and honest in all that he said and all that he did.

As an NALC member, John lived out a life of service. Over the course of many years of involvement, he served as a Re-

cording Secretary, Vice-President, Health Benefits Representative and Shop Steward. And, he accomplished his duties with distinction, dedication and with honor.

Moreover, John could always be counted on to immerse himself in whatever activities were directed at supporting MDA (the Muscular Dystrophy Association). Whether it was hours spent in the NALC “mailroom” at the MDA Telethon, or as a bowler in MDA Bowl-a-Thons, John was *always* there!

John served as a delegate to many State and National NALC conventions where he was a part of a democratic process in determining the direction that the NALC would take in contract negotiations, the allocation of resources or in voting for national representatives.

Ultimately, I cherish the fact that I could rely upon his friendship and wisdom.

One of my fondest memories of John is best demonstrated in this picture which was taken at one of the Branch 782 MDA Bowl-a-Thons. My three year old daughter,

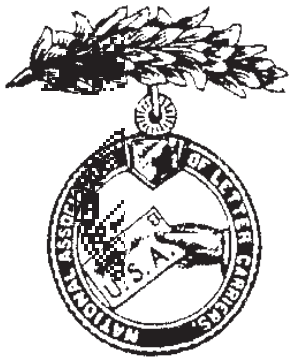
Bethany, always seemed to be drawn to his “grandfatherly” ways and John could unfailingly be counted on to offer her a welcome place to be. (She is now a mother of three, with another on the way, and she remembers John fondly).

My mother is present in the picture. She didn't smile all that often. But, she did as she saw what I did... Thank you, John!

BASIL ZUNIGA



Additional thoughts, memories and pictures of John Ross can be found if you check out the web version at WWW.782NALC.COM



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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.

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

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

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

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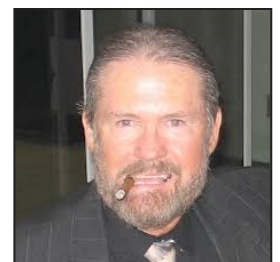
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www.782nalc.com**

Rick Plummer, Webmaster





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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

from the
editor-guy

Our newsletter is mailed to all Active Duty Letter Carriers who are Branch 782 members. It is *also* mailed out to all of the our Retirees who have sometimes moved away from where they once worked and no longer read the obituaries which are published in the local newspaper. Our newsletter may be the only way that they can find out that people that they worked with for years have passed away...

Thank you for letting me publish these kinds of notices.

Memoria in
aeterna

John Edward Ross

May 23, 1941 – April 11, 2017

Additional details on pages 20-26 in the web version...

Much more about John and the history of NALC Branch 782 can be found if you search out the web version of our newsletter at WWW.782NALC.COM. Many more pictures and testimonials from folks who were active in past years chronicle the many ways in which John had an impact on Rights and Benefits that YOU enjoy today.

Roger was a hard working, helpful, and loving man. He was a proud member of the US Air Force and served his country during the Cold War as an air traffic controller. He was a devoted US mailman here in Bakersfield for 25 years. He loved his country and especially his city. Roger was a very handy and helpful friend to all who knew him!

Roger was a loving and devoted single father. He was a man that loved adventure and the great outdoors, especially off-roading. He loved riding dirt bikes, and quads, and taking his Jeep off road. He was also a proud pilot! Roger was an amazing grandfather and he loved his grand babies so much. Roger will be immensely missed by all those he left behind.

Services were held March 24th at the Bakersfield National Cemetery at 10:45 am.

Published in *Bakersfield Californian* on March 19, 2017



Roger Pierce

USPS & NALC NEGOTIATE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT!!!