

# 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, 1891**



WEB VERSION @WWW.782NALCCOM

SEPTEMBER 2011

If you're "here", you've gotten to the latest "web" version of the *NALC BRANCH 782 E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE*. Thank you for taking a look! For context, our web version augments the printed material published in our regular monthly newsletter. And, we build on that to let you explore some additional insights provided by other Letter Carriers around the country. Obviously, this "digest" reflects selections that caught my interest...

Why do I do this? It is prohibitively expensive to publish our newsletter with a bunch of pages. However, ***THERE IS JUST SO MUCH RELEVANT INFORMATION OUT THERE THAT IS AVAILABLE IN THE MANY NALC NEWSLETTERS FROM ALL OVER THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS!!*** This format provides us a great opportunity for sharing pertinent information with any individual Branch 782 member who wants more.

So...what kinds of things can you find as you electronically "flip" through the pages that weren't in the original print version??? (For perspective, the September 2011 print version had twenty pages, the web version has forty pages.)

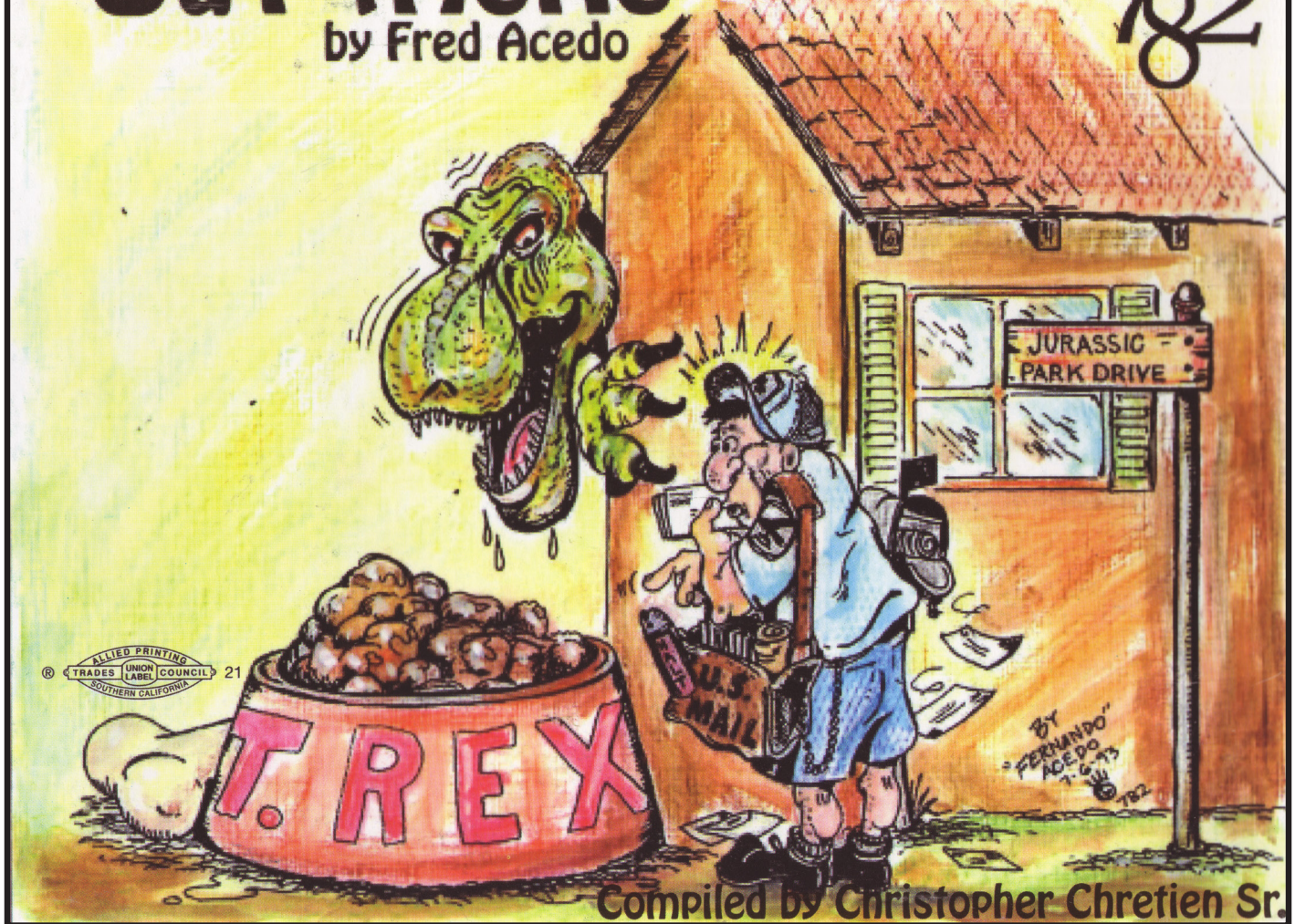
Pages 8 sums up what the USPS would like to do with your financial future. Pages 17-18 gives you a little context on what is happening and asks "Write Your Congressman TODAY???" You may have heard something about billionaire Warrren Buffett's suggestion that the rich be taxed more. On pages 21-22 read the article that submits his ideas. By the same token, another person wrote something interesting about how the "Richest Americans Can Help Fix Social Security" (and that's also on page 22). Pages 23 and 24 offer an interesting look at taxes. And, because life on the workroom floor continues, page 26 gives you some pretty basic information about the PS Form 3999. Know what it is? You should. Pages 28 and 29 share more pictures from the recent baby shower for 93304 Letter Carrier Deven Patterson. Did you ever think about transferring to another city? Think that everything is the same? Read page 30. A Carrier who transferred from Seattle, WA to Brooklyn, NY shares her story. I had a birthday recently. I also asked some people to get together with me for breakfast to celebrate. See pages 31-33 to see what we did and see some of the photographic evidence. Pages 34-35 give you an idea of what is going on down south in Irvine, CA and what may lie in *your* future, too. Page 36 schools you in the concept of "Wish in one hand..." and addresses a Customer Connect idea which is pretty good. Remember 9/11? Where were you? Read about a Carrier who was in Washington, DC. ***MOST IMPORTANTLY: DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT FRED ACEDO'S CARTOONS! THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING!!!***

Electronically Yours,  
Basil Zuniga, Branch 782 Editor-guy

***And now???? An Adversisement for a great, great, GREAT book that you can buy...***

# "Out There" by Fred Acedo

BRANCH  
782



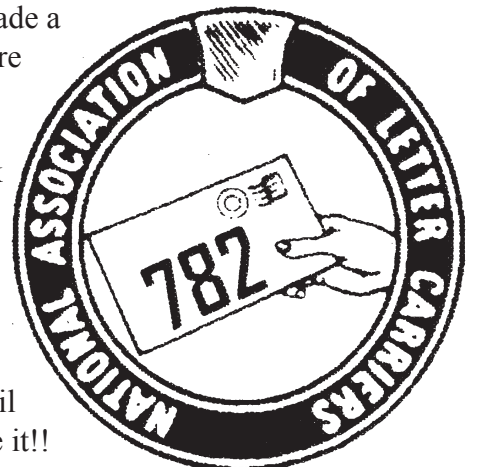
So what is this advertising message about? **THIS** is an MDA fundraiser. We are asking for **YOUR** help!!!!!!

We envisioned that all 2,500 copies of this book would be sold at the national NALC Convention in Anaheim in 2010. Didn't happen. We still have about 1500 copies of this book waiting to be sold before we can make our anticipated MDA donation. And—to add a little twist—a member made a motion at our general meeting that we had to sell **ALL** of the books before we could make our donation...

The book (about, for and by members of the NALC) chronicles the work of Branch 782 S.A.N.E Fred Acedo through the first nine of his nineteen years producing outstanding glimpses into who we are.

So...you may ask, what can you do? **ORDER A BOOK!!!**

Contact Kim Gerdes at (661) 301-9676; or, try her at the following e-mail address: "kgerdes91@hotmail.com". Please help us out. We'd appreciate it!!





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VOLUME LXXXII NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 2011

## Johnny on the Spot



### “What Can I do?”

I am sure most of you have heard some kind of story about the Postal Service lately—either through a stand up, on the nightly news, read it from a newspaper article or one of our Union publications. Maybe you’ve talked with another co-worker or customer about it. I know that I have.

The truth of the matter is that our company is in dire straits right now. There are many

ideas on the table on how to save the Postal Service: 5 day delivery, closing Post offices, consolidating mail processing facilities, evaluated routes, reducing the work force by 220,000 people and getting legislation passed to save the Postal Service. The latter is the topic of this article.

### OUT THERE



Continued on next page...



There is currently a Bill which has been introduced into Congress: (HR 1351-“The USPS Pension Obligation Recalculation Act”).



Our Union has worked very hard on getting support for this legislation passed. This Bill currently has 206 co-sponsors from both political parties. HR 1351 takes the necessary first steps toward ensuring a financially sound future for the United States Postal Service.

The bill was drafted with three major components taking into consideration the Segal Company Report issued by the Postal Regulatory Commission:

1. It calls on the OPM to recalculate the USPS surplus in the Civil Service Retirement System within six months of enactment, using a methodology that fairly allocates the cost of pensions between the

Post Office Department and the U.S. Postal Service as proposed by the Segal Report.

2. Then, once the accurate “postal surplus” is determined by the OPM, the agency would have 15 days to transfer the surplus to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund.

3. Direct the OPM to permit the USPS to use most of its \$6.9 billion surplus in the FERS system to satisfy two obligations in FY 2011: a \$5.5 billion payment due to the PSRHBFB, and a \$1.2 billion estimated payment to the Department of Labor for Federal Employees Compensation Act (workers comp.) expenses. Any remaining funds would be used to reduce the Postal Service’s normal cost-percentage for FERS in future years.

On this very topic, the NALC is conducting rallies nationwide on September 27th, 2011 to garner support for HR1351. Our branch rally will be at Congressman McCarthy’s office here in Bakersfield, 4100 Empire Drive, Suite 150 on Tuesday September 27th, 2011 from 4:00 to 5:30pm. We will be asking for his support on HR 1351. We are also gathering signatures on petition forms urging him to support this Bill. Please talk with your shop steward to sign the petition. There is strength in numbers, so the more names we have the





more attention we will receive. On that note; Please take some time out of your busy day to join the rally.



We cannot participate in the rally in uniform so bring a change of clothes that day if you are working or go home and change before you come out to the rally.

Branch 782  
Webmaster Rick  
Plummer has cre-

ated a Facebook page for the Branch. Look for it on Facebook under NALC Golden Empire Branch. The Branch needed a tool to communicate with you—our members—on an immediate basis. With these difficult times the Postal Service is facing, we need to get messages out ASAP and this should be a good forum to do just that. Thank you very much, Rick!!!

But—of course—all of the information that you know doesn't do much if you don't do something with it. *Really, GET INVOLVED!!!* I hope to see a large turnout of Letter Carriers September 27!!!

JOHN ORTEGA  
Branch 782 Vice President

## Congressman Issa Picket

This week—with less than four days notice—approximately *one hundred* Letter Carriers from sixteen Branches across the state came together in Vista California!! We joined with other unions in a labor-coordinated picket against Congressman Darrell Issa at his local district office.

Our members voiced their opinions against Issa's aggressive anti-worker agenda and his plans to reform the Postal Service by dismantling the services it provides, cutting our workforce, and reducing our benefits.

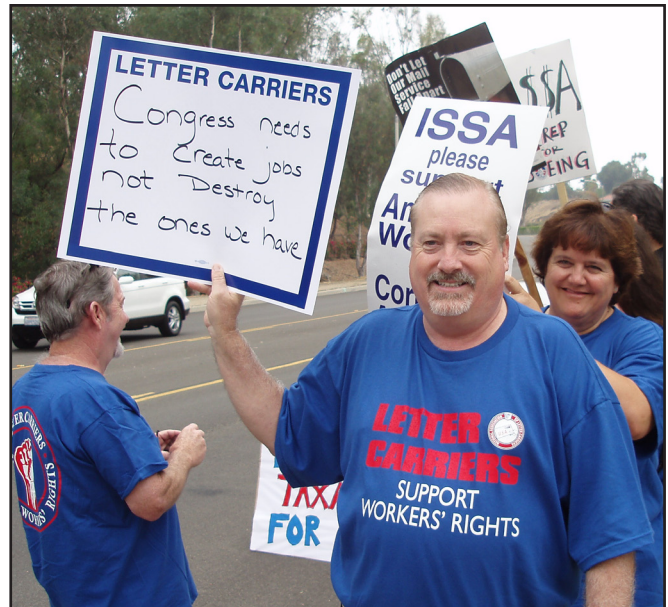
Branch 70 President Ricardo Guzman, and many of his members, worked with the CSALC to help organize this successful demonstration of what organized labor can do!

The California State Association of Letter Carriers wishes to thank all of our Branches who participated at the protest.

We may need to do this again in the future and with more notice we will have even a larger turnout, stay tuned.

In unionism,

JOHN BEAUMONT  
President  
California State Association of Letter Carriers



These pictures presented courtesy of NALC members John Beaumont, Jim Walzenbach, Mark Lesch and Ginger Austin.





# NALC *e-Activist* Network

## 'Save America's Postal Service' update: Events page is now live

As you know, "Save America's Postal Service" rallies will take place in every congressional district in the United States on Sept 27 from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (local time).

These information events are designed to encourage Congress to pass H.R. 1351, legislation that addresses the financial crisis facing the Postal Service.



The Events page at [SaveAmericasPostalService.org](http://SaveAmericasPostalService.org) has been updated to include more than 300 sites where rallies will take place. The website will be updated every day, so make sure you bookmark it and check it often for the latest information.

Events on Sept. 27 will engage the public through speeches, handouts and gatherings to make our voices heard.

It's anticipated that a wide variety of supporters will participate in "Save America's Postal Service" rallies, including small business owners who use the mail to advertise, businesses that consistently ship products using the Postal Service, and faith leaders and progressive allies who have concerns for the plight of working men and women.

Our combined dedication and activism will contribute to returning the Postal Service to solid financial footing.

If you need to update your NALC e-Activist Network e-mail address, you need complete the sign-up process again to help us validate your membership information. [Click here to go to the e-Activist Network sign-up page at nalc.org.](#)



# September 27, 2011

Our rally will be at Congressman McCarthy's office in Bakersfield,  
4100 Empire Drive, Suite 150 on Tuesday from 4:00 to 5:30pm.

## We will be asking for his support on HR-1351!

# *Here Today, Gone Tomorrow!?!?*

Working for the United States Postal Service would seem like a secure and "safe" job, but the new reality in the world that we find ourselves is that none of our jobs are secure...

No one is safe from losing their job anymore as job security has been almost entirely diminished due to changing times. It is difficult to understand what is going on when we—as employees—are not told anything but only learn about our situation through various media outlets. Management does not know anything and postal employees are left with the distorted version of the news, as they decide what to show and what not to show.

Now, more than ever, we postal employees need to stand up together to protect our jobs and preserve the integrity of the United States Postal Service!

And, if you have already retired, and are thinking that you are safe from the procedures being taken against postal employees, think again! Actions

have already been proposed by the Postmaster General to provide diminished benefits for retirees, and to take back everything that you have worked for. Before you know it, all of the retirement that you have worked for might be cut tremendously...leaving you with minimal health benefits and very little left to live off of.

Allowing Congress to cut our week to a five-day delivery could prove to be the end of all of our jobs, and may be the point of no return. It could start a "death spiral" from which we might never recover.

It is incorrect to believe that all the Union does is file grievances and get Carriers money. The Union does, in fact, accomplish much more for all postal workers...Carriers, Clerks, Mailhandlers, *and* Supervisors and Managers!

The Union is made up of each one of us as members. So, if you have an opinion or complaint regarding the Union come to a Union meeting and speak up. The Union meetings are always open to discussion and no one's perspective will be unheard. Members who attend the Union meeting can also discuss what is occurring on the workroom floor, or conversely, what is not occurring.

As postal workers we *all* need to come together to be heard, as we all may be terminated from the Postal Service sooner than you think. *Did you just read what you think that you did?* Read it one more time... **"We all may be terminated from the Postal Service sooner than you think..."**

Come to the Union meeting September 27th to find out what is really occurring and discover the truth behind the status of our jobs. And, just as importantly, *that* is also the day that we are going to picket in front of Congressman McCarthy's office. Why should *you* be there? Think about it. "Here today, gone tomorrow." It is a reality and it can happen to *you*...

SHARI SHARP  
Dole Court Shop Steward



**5 - DAY**  
*Is still the*  
**WRONG WAY**





# NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) © NALC

March 11, 2011

## Congressional Mandates and the Great Recession Have Caused the Postal Service's Recent Financial Challenges

**T**he U.S Postal Service (USPS) is facing long-term financial challenges due to the increased use of the Internet as a substitute for first-class mail. In order to survive the Postal Service will need to transform its business model to succeed in the 21st century.

But use of the Internet is not the principal cause of the Postal Service's significant losses over the last four years. Those losses are due to the Great Recession, which is temporary, and to a requirement mandated by Congress that the Postal Service aggressively pre-fund its future retiree health benefits. No other government agency or company has such a requirement.

The USPS needs to change, but it should not be forced to make short-sighted decisions under duress. Near-term, fiscally responsible reforms are needed to give the Postal Service breathing room to devise a more successful long-term business plan.

### **1. The requirement to massively pre-fund retiree health benefits over 10 years, combined with the Great Recession, has caused the recent financial challenges.**

- The Postal Service averaged about \$2.3 billion a year in profits from 2003 to 2006. It did not have to pre-fund retiree health benefits in those years.
- Over the past four years, the Postal Service has reported what appear to be jaw-dropping losses amounting to more than \$20 billion. There are three main causes for these losses: the \$20.9 billion cost, since 2007, of pre-funding future retiree health benefits; the large drop in mail volume and related revenue caused by the Great Recession; and the ongoing impact of mail volume lost to Internet diversion. In the absence of just the pre-funding requirement, the USPS would have recorded a net surplus of \$611 million over the past four years, despite the recession and Internet diversion.

- From 2011 to 2017 the congressional mandate to pre-fund retiree health benefits will consume 9 percent of the Postal Service's annual budget. Yet these benefits will be spent over 75 years. No business could survive long with such a burden, even in good times.

### **2. This congressional mandate is exceptional and unfair to the Postal Service.**

- The Postal Service's retiree health benefits are 42 percent pre-funded. No other federal agency has pre-funded its employees' health benefits, and companies are not required to pre-fund retiree health benefits.
- Nearly two-thirds of Fortune 1000 companies do not pre-fund retiree health benefits. Of those companies that do pre-fund, the funding level is just 28 percent.

### **3. The Postal Service has overpaid tens of billions to the federal government's pension system. The money should be refunded.**

- Two different independent reviews by highly reputable private-sector actuarial service firms have concluded that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has effectively overcharged the Postal Service for some \$50 billion to \$75 billion in pension costs associated with service performed for the taxpayer-funded Post Office Department (POD) before the U.S. Postal Service was created in 1971.
- Both the Hay Group's study for the USPS Office of the Inspector General and the Segal Company's report for the Postal Regulatory Commission concluded that the methods used by the OPM unfairly shifted tens of billions in costs from the taxpayer-backed POD to the ratepayer-supported USPS.
- Congress should direct OPM to fairly calculate the USPS obligations and transfer the resulting pension surplus to the postal Retiree Health Benefits Fund. This would allow the Postal Service to fully pre-fund retiree health benefits as mandated by Congress.

- This transfer of pension assets would not alter the government's fiscal condition, as it represents a shift from one government retiree trust fund to another.
- The transfer of pension assets also would not affect the Postal Service's pension plans, which are already 99.5 percent funded. By comparison, the rest of the government's plans are funded at 41.5 percent and the average funding level at large companies is about 80 percent.

**4. Congress should put the pre-funding of retiree health benefits on a pay-as-you-go basis if it does not fix the \$75 billion pension overpayment.**

- Other federal agencies and two-thirds of America's biggest companies pay for retiree health benefits as the bill comes due, without pre-funding the benefits. The Postal Service should be treated the same way if Congress does not return the pension overpayments.

**5. Adopting the measures outlined above (points 3 and 4) is the best way to stabilize the Postal Service's finances and would not threaten 80,000 good-paying middle-class jobs.**

- The Postal Service projects that 80,000 full- and part-time jobs would be eliminated if Saturday delivery ends. The country cannot afford these job losses, especially during a recession.
- Many people depend on Saturday delivery—seniors who need their mail-order prescription drugs, small businesses on Main Street trying to meet payroll, and major businesses such as eBay, whose business model depends on Saturday delivery. The Postal Service estimates that eliminating Saturday delivery will cut its costs by just 5 percent—but it will cut mail delivery by 17 percent. That is not a good tradeoff.
- Eliminating Saturday delivery should be a last resort. More time should be spent determining if mail volume will stabilize—if not increase—as the recession ends.
- The loss of Saturday delivery would adversely affect the “postal brand,” thereby reducing demand for mail services and reducing revenue. This could potentially create an even stronger downward spiral in the use of mail.
- Fixing the \$75 billion pension overpayment and using the money to pre-fund retiree health benefits will stabilize the Postal Service's budget.



This is what editorials across the Nation are saying: “Is 5-day delivery the next step?” Regarding a 5-day delivery by the U.S. Postal Service as alleviating some of the current fiscal problems is misleading in implying that we are a taxpayer-supported entity. You say that a bad alternative of the current situation is “a bloated, inefficient taxpayer-funded

mail service.” The postal service gets no tax support. It is self-supporting, funded by income from stamps and other services. These editorials should be accurate in its facts and not publish misleading statements. Reducing service to 5 days will not solve any current difficulties!

Part of the postal deficit is caused by a recent requirement by Congress to prepay \$5.5 billion a year into its retiree health benefits fund. Besides no other agency having this requirement, it is part of the reason for current losses. If not for this required annual payment, the Postal Service would have broken even during a 4-year period that extends into the recession. The 4-year payment requirement was \$21 billion, explaining the loss of \$20 billion. In addition, the GAO has found a long-term postal overpayment to the federal pension fund of \$50 to 75 billion. This can be returned by Congress to the Postal Service for current use with no impact on the federal deficit or taxpayers.

The Postal Service (note “Service” in the name) is mandated to break even overall—not to make a profit or to pay any share holders. It is designed to *serve* the American people in places large and small, in *every* area of the country, and *every* resident on a 6-day-a-week basis.

The proposal to reduce service is not only unnecessary, it is also harmful. If there is no Saturday delivery, your Saturday mail order medicine may not arrive until Monday or Tuesday; your Saturday DVD may not arrive until Monday or Tuesday; your Saturday business mail, including checks, may not arrive until Monday or Tuesday; your Saturday bills may not arrive on Monday or...let me stop while I’m ahead.

I challenge ALL Letter Carriers to do your part and come out and join us at the rally and help fight the fight! After all, it’s *your* JOB!!!!!! Sign the petition and write your letters to support H R 1351.

Join us for the “Save America’s Postal Service” Rally. Make your voice heard, do NOT miss this opportunity!

When: 4:00-5:30 pm, Tuesday, September 27  
Where: 22nd Congressional Office – Kevin McCarthy  
4100 Empire Drive  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93309

DIANA HERRERA  
NALC Branch 782 Legislative Liaison



## ***Important Message from Region 13 Business Agent, Tim Dowdy***

### **ATTENTION CITY CARRIERS!!!**

#### **THIS IS YOUR UNION GIVING YOU CLEAR NOTICE, CLEAR WARNING, THAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE HARM UNLESS YOU ACT**

The following attacks against your financial interests are now in specific bills before Congress, or are being recommended and very likely to soon be in an actual bill before Congress.

1. Allow the USPS to choose to go to fewer than six days of delivery per week. This will eliminate roughly 60,000 Postal Service jobs if one day is eliminated, thousands more jobs if multiple days are eliminated. It could be you who gets laid off or transferred long distances.
2. Put in place an appointed "Financial Responsibility Authority" which will have the authority to cut postal wages and benefits as they see fit, and override existing rules, regardless of what any existing labor contract may have provided for.
3. Take away postal employees' collective bargaining rights, through their unions, to bargain for health insurance benefits and costs, and life insurance benefits and costs.
4. Require changes to the arbitration process, which will heavily tilt the process in favor of management rather than a fair and objective balance.
5. Raise your minimum retirement age.
6. Require you to contribute a far higher amount from each check toward your own retirement.
7. Substantially reduce your projected monthly retirement amount.
8. Raise your Social Security retirement age, and substantially reduce that monthly benefit.
9. Lower or eliminate the employer's matching funds into the Thrift Savings Plan.

Non-partisan fact: All the above attacks on postal employees and government workers are currently being pushed by primarily one political party in the United States Congress.

Non-partisan fact: The same attacks you've seen against collective bargaining rights and pay/ benefits of state workers, are now being launched against federal/ postal workers.

**You now have to make a choice: do nothing and be seriously harmed, or fight back.**

Please call and write your congressperson and two senators immediately. Do so again, every 30 days, until further notice. Sign up now for the NALC's COLCPE legislative/ political fund. Read your Postal Record and go to your union meetings to help fight these attacks. **BE WARNED, YOUR UNION CAN ONLY DO THIS WITH YOU, IT CAN'T DO THIS FOR YOU.**

Article courtesy of the August 2011 *NOVA CARRIER* published by Annandale, VA Branch 3520

# Minutes of the August 2011 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd day of August, 2011, by President, Mike Towery at the branch office, Bakersfield. All members of the Executive Board were present except Trustees, Lucinda Martinez and Danny Blair. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; S.A.N.E., Fred Acedo, OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes; Legislative Rep., Diana Herrera; and Photographer, Anita Holderman. The minutes of the July 26, 2011 meeting were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Teresa Ortega reported she has not done anything yet, it is not time. "Talk to me later." Basil Zuniga reported that the newsletter folding went really, really fast. There were lots of members from East Bakersfield with their families in attendance. Next month will be Hillcrest Station's turn. Basil discussed the newsletter on the website, there is lots of information regarding the "Tea Party", TSP, Social Security, working at another station, Third Party Claims, Medicare, paycheck shortages and much, much more!! Norma Hamer reported that she is still working on getting a location for the "Fill the Satchel" MDA fundraiser. Mabel Bullis reported that one book was sold this month, with a total remaining of 1551.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Kim Gerdes reported that it is time to order the Color Coded Calendars. Molly Biggar made a motion that the branch purchase 300 calendars. Seconded by Alan Smith and passed.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike reported that the Postmaster is getting everything together for the meeting regarding the move of East Bakersfield Station to Brundage. Mike informed the members that John Ortega will be the steward at Brundage Station and that Mabel Bullis will be the Assistant Secretary. The COLA, which is effective September 10, is \$978.00 per year, 47 cents per hour. Mike told the members present that there are a lot of rumors about cutting Saturday delivery as early as March, they are just that, rumors, no one knows what is going to happen yet. Some supervisors are presenting rumors or their opinions as fact in stand-ups. Let Mike know if this is happening in your office.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that \$11,950.06 was collected for July.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$62,584.31
Dues and Income	\$11,135.57
Interest Income	\$7.50
Balance	\$73,727.38
Expenses	\$16,198.41
Ending Balance	\$57,528.97

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Alan Smith.

The \$300.00 would have been won by Maria Ramirez if she had been present.

There were 31 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES  
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

## Membership Meeting Drawing

# \$400.00!!!\*



*\*Fine Print: As a Branch 782 member, YOU have a chance to win \$400 this month!! But, you HAVE to be present at the meeting when names are drawn...*



# NON-MEMBER LIST

## MARCH 2011

### DOWNTOWN STATION

D. Pearce  
J. Cruz

### SOUTH STATION

*100% Union!!!*

### EAST BAKERSFIELD

*100% Union!!!*

### HILLCREST

*100% Union!!!*

### BRUNDAGE

D. Kinglee

### DOLE COURT

S. Hancock

### STOCKDALE

A. White  
J. Oh  
G. S. Saran  
P.M. Russel

### CAMINO MEDIA

*100% Union!!!*

### ARVIN

C. J. Brown

### AVENAL

*100% Union!!!*

### BORON

*100% Union!!!*

### CALIFORNIA CITY

*100% Union!!!*

### DELANO

C.V. Quebral  
L.A. Campos

### EDWARDS

*100% Union!!!*

### LAMONT

*100% Union!!!*

### McFARLAND

*100% Union!!!*

### MOJAVE

*100% Union!!!*

### RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce  
H.G. Blanco  
L.M. Montano

### SHAFTER

I. M. New  
M. D. Voights

### TAFT

B. W. Krier  
K.J. Hughes

### TEHACHAPI

*100% Union!!!*

### TRONA

*100% Union!!!*

### WASCO

*100% Union!!!*

We have 394 total Carriers in the complement assigned to cities represented by our Branch—only 18 are non-members. We are 95% organized!

# Tell Your Shop Steward!

by Patrick Mullen, Vice-President  
NALC Branch 2008

The NALC always encourages you to let your Steward know what's going on. It's very important and a couple of incidents this past month reinforce the reasons why. The first incident was a case where Management issued a Carrier a 7 day suspension. The Union said, "Wait a minute!!! How can you go straight to a 7 day suspension when the Carrier has no discipline on file?" Management said, "This Carrier has a Letter of Warning on file." The Steward disputed this, so Management pulled out the Letter of Warning with the Carrier's signature on it that was issued one month earlier. A bit of a surprise—and a "kick in the butt" to the Steward! The Carrier had indeed been issued a Letter of Warning (LOW) but failed to tell the Shop Steward. It was now too late to file a grievance so the Letter of Warning was active and going to be in the Carriers file for two years. Had the Steward been informed about the LOW, it would have been fought and maybe reduced to a discussion. But, because it was not grieved, we were now left to fight a 7 day suspension. The 7 day suspension was grieved and reduced to a LOW by the "B-Team". The problem is the Carrier now has two active Letters of Warning on file. Not good... So, **PLEASE, PLEASE** guys and gals tell your Steward!

The second incident involved a Carrier that had a medical problem. The supervisor said that she tried to contact the Carrier many times and could not. The Carrier had recently moved and did not get the letters from the Post Office. Well, the supervisor was a little bent out of shape and decided that she would not pay the Carrier. So when the Carrier got a pay stub with 80 hours of LWOP instead of 80 hours of sick leave, it was a bit of a shock. Imagine getting nothing for a pay check! How could you pay your bills or feed yourself and your family? Had the Steward known what was going on, he could have been talking with the supervisor and the Carrier to make sure that nobody was in the dark and that it did not come to a zero dollars pay stub. So, **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE** guys and gals let your Shop Steward know what's going on! The Union is there to help. Let us know...

I recently went to training for Workers Compensation and—hopefully—I will be able to help any of you that have a Workers Comp issue.

I will tell you all now that if you have ANY accident on the clock, report it **immediately** to your supervisor. If you are going to obtain medical treatment your supervisor *has* to authorize it by issuing you a CA-16. They **must** also issue you a CA-1. This form is to document the injury or illness and will get a "case number" active for you. You will also need a CA-17. This form will be used by the doctor to establish any restrictions that you may have from your injury.

***It is very important that you get these three forms!*** It is your right as a federal employee.

Do not let your supervisor talk you out of it. It is not their place to question any injury that you may have had. OWCP will handle the claim and it will be based on medical documentation. If you are hurt on the job you are entitled to "Continuation Of Pay". Ask for it! There is (to me) an unfair 3 day waiting period that you have to use you own leave for *but if you are out more than 14 days you get those 3 days back*. The most important part of this is: **REPORT THE INJURY OR ILLNESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**; and, if you are injured on the job, do NOT leave the office without forms CA-1, CA-16 and CA-17.

Now—*one final time*—guys and gals: **PLEASE**, let your Shop Steward know what's going on!!!

Article courtesy of the June 2011 *Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update* published by NALC Branch 2008 in Tarpon Springs, FL.

# “Fill the Satchel”

## October 2, 2011



Please come join in this great *NATIONWIDE* NALC event! It will held on October 2, 2011 from 11 am-3 pm. I am so excited!!! I ask that *YOU* help to make this a successful event where you work... I ask that

you *MAKE A DIFFERENCE!*

In Bakersfield, our location will be at the Northwest Promenade, located on Rosedale Highway between Calloway and Coffee. We will be setting up in front of the stop signs located at Roadhouse Grill/Autozone and Wendy's/IHOP/Starbucks.

Letter Carriers from all over this this great nation will be donating their own time and collecting donations using their satchels. This is not a USPS sponsored event, but the Postmaster General has agreed to allow us to wear our uniforms with our satchels to collect MDA donations.

Come stand on the corners and please help ask our community for their support for this great cause! Let's show our support for the MDA by having as many Letter Carriers there as possible! The bigger the level of participation, the possibilities of more monies collected to help everyone that the Muscular Dystrophy Association benefits!

So, show up in your uniform best and show your support for the MDA! Be a part of this one day, nationwide event to help the MDA! Make a difference!!!

NORMA HAMER

Shafter Shop Steward and NALC Branch 782 MDA Coordinator





Dear Norma,

It was nice talking to you today and discussing the possibility of hosting the Bakersfield satchel collection at the Northwest Promenade on Sunday, October 2nd. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) represents a union of some 240 thousand professional members of the United States Postal Service who deliver mail to homes and businesses across the US. They committed their support to MDA back in 1952, the NALC represents one of MDA's first National sponsoring organizations.

Earlier this year, NALC President, Fred Rolando relayed his intent to establish a satchel collection campaign that would represent a single day membership-wide opportunity to support MDA. We're grateful to President Rolando and the NALC for presenting us with this potential new opportunity. The single day event will take place on Sunday, October 2nd across the United States. The event will be titled "NALC Satchel Drive" and will take place at select retail locations secured with the sup-

port of MDA staff. The Bakersfield NALC Branch #782 has expressed interest in the Satchel drive and we are currently seeking a venue to host the drive from 11 am -3 pm. All letter carriers will be in their work uniforms and have delivery satchels.

**MDA will provide:** Certificate of liability insurance. In addition, all NALC members are covered by MDA's insurance policy. Posters, stating donations are welcome and support MDA (See attached sample), are available. We will also provide Publicity: Local Press Release/ Media Contacts.

The funds raised through this event will help provide diagnostic and treatment services to MDA families in Kern County, as well as to fund research projects seeking a cure for the more than 40 neuromuscular diseases. MDA will also use funds raised to send children served by MDA to summer camp for one week where they get to participate in specialized activities. Our programs are funded entirely through the contributions of individuals, corporations and foundations. We receive no government grants



or United Way funding, nor do we seek or receive fees from patients or their families.

We would greatly appreciate your support of the satchel drive. I welcome any questions and would more than happy to answer them. Due to the event nationally being held on October 2nd we would greatly appreciate a response by Friday, September 9th for planning purposes.

Thank you,

RENÉE CONTRERAS  
Fundraising Coordinator Muscular  
Dystrophy Association - Central Valley  
Chapter 1943 N. Gateway Blvd.,  
Suite 101 Fresno, CA 93727  
(b) 559-453-9822 (f) 559-453-9829  
E-mail: rcontreras@mdausa.org

## National Association of Letter Carriers

100 Indiana Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001-2144

### Memorandum

Telephone: (202) 393-4695  
Fax: (202) 628-7720

From the Desk of **FREDRIC V. ROLANDO**   
President

July, 2011

To: NALC Branch Presidents

Subject: Fill the Satchel for MDA

NALC is excited to announce our first ever "Fill the Satchel" event to help Letter Carrier's deliver the cure for MDA. The event is scheduled for Sunday, October 2, 2011. I hope that you will join me and thousands of other Letter Carriers on the streets in our communities collecting donations from our customers—the American public.

In the 1950's when NALC had "porch light brigades" we collected money from customers after work for MDA. NALC raised over \$3 million dollars annually. This was at a time when Letter Carrier salaries were only \$4,400 per year. If the previous generation of Letter Carriers collected that kind of money, we should be inspired to do even more for our longtime charity.

This is not a USPS sponsored event. However, the Postmaster General has agreed to allow Letter Carriers to collect MDA donations in uniform with satchels for this event.

Be sure to check and abide by the laws in your community regarding fund raising events and plan accordingly to make your "Fill the Satchel" day the most simplistic, productive fund raiser that you have ever organized.

**Best of luck and let's Fill the Satchel for MDA.**

# ADVENTURES IN THE SPEED BIZ

By Ernie Carlson

I'm getting tired of all the attacks on unions and working people in the press. I'm tired of feeling like I have to constantly defend the right to earn a decent wage and make an honest living, where the only two options presented are: ostentatious wealth or slum-level poverty.

The first one is presented as something you earn while the latter is something you deserve. What if you don't want either one? Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't mind making more money. I wouldn't mind being rich up to a certain level (and no, I'm not going to say where that level is, partly because I'm not sure myself).

One of the untrue statements union critics make is that union members are only in it for the money because union workers tend to make more money than non-union workers. And while the second part of that last sentence is true, the first part is utter nonsense. In fact, if you want to be rich, being in a union won't help you much. A union work environment levels the playing field for its workers. Excluding outside mitigating factors, it keeps them from being poor and it also prevents them from getting rich.

How? Contracts between unions and employers try to keep working conditions equal and fair. In our job, if you want to make more money, you get on the unit-wide Overtime Desired List. If you want to make some money without working your butt off, you go on Work-Assignment. And if you like looking at a paycheck with a fairly predictable gross/net amount (in a perfect world) you go on the "NO Overtime List". For regular Letter Carriers this set-up is more or less fair, in that each has a choice about which list they want to be on. TE's, by the way, would love to have these choices, and it kind of puts the lie to union/ employer contracts being equal for everyone (I'll get to that in another article).

But if you want to make a lot of money, there are barriers set up to keep you from going past an extraordinary amount. You're not supposed to work yourself to death. And you're not supposed to make much more than others on the same list who want to do the same amount of work. That's why management—with the union keeping an eye on them—is supposed to equalize out the unit wide list: you get the same opportunities and the same rewards.

It's why you're not supposed to work over twelve hours in a day. Or sixty hours in a week. It's also why step increases and COLA's determine your pay level, and not supervisor's whims or other outside factors. It keeps things superficially, objectively fair. You could be a "better" (whatever *that* means) Letter Carrier than the Carrier next to you, with better eyes, faster feet, a more resourceful memory, but none of that matters if both of you do the same type of work with relatively the same amount of effort. That because of the fact that you're both paid a good wage and good benefits makes both inequality and excellence in ability somewhat nil. As the saying goes, a fair day's work for a fair day's pay...

If you want to make more money from your job you can budget better, spend less, or play with your thrift savings plan. Outside your job you can play the lottery, write a bestselling book, movie, or song, develop a new invention, start a business, or try to rob a bank without getting caught.

The point is, while a union job in most cases won't make you rich, it won't keep you poor, either. Most non-unionized blue-collar, and increasingly white-collar jobs, unfortunately, don't have those benefits.

Out tHeRe



Article courtesy of the Duluth, Minnesota NALC Branch 114 *Zenith Branch News* published in August 2011.



# Scuttlebutt

by Doug Arnold, Editor  
NALC Branch 245

I recently attended my 25 year high school reunion. As a member of the planning committee I have worked on this project for over a year. Our turnout was less than expected and we were in quite a financial bind to cover the bills. I'm not sure why the attendance was so low this time. It may have been the time of year, the economy or something none of us have thought of yet.

Pretty much all of my classmates from the Harlem Class of 1986 know that I'm a mailman. I tend to creep them out a bit by knowing where everybody lives. (I do the mailing list after all.) As you all are aware, once someone finds out you are a mailman they have to share their complaints with their mailman or the Postal Service in general.

I met the husband of a classmate that I had not seen since 1986. When he found out what I did for a living.....it began.

He's a manager at a privately owned company somewhere near Chicago. It doesn't really matter who he worked for or what he did. I was there to defend me and mine He started in about how 'out of the control' the benefit packages are for public unions and they must be reigned in. So I asked the obvious question: "How much vacation do I get?"

He explained that his comment was not directed towards me. Sure it wasn't.

So I said "Well, I am a member of a public union, so how much do I make? How many sick days do I get? What is my pension like?" He replied that he didn't know what any of those were. So I asked "Well, if you don't know the answer to any of those, then how do you know my benefits are 'out of control'?"

I went on to explain to him that I thought we had fundamental difference in how things should be.

I stated that I felt that if Worker A was getting screwed and Worker B had it good, that I thought Worker A should be brought UP to Worker B's level and he felt that Worker B should be getting screwed as much as Worker A. He didn't exactly disagree.

He did go on to say that performance and productivity were paramount. If you didn't produce, you were gone. He had to fight to keep his job every year and I should have to fight to keep mine. So I again asked a question: "If the 20 year old mailman has greater productivity than the 50 year old mailman, should we fire all the 50 year olds and replace them with 20 year olds?"

That one left him scratching his head. He is looking down the road at 50 as am I.

The fellow then began to tell me about how unions are outdated now. They had their time in the

past when workplace abuse was rampant, but that just doesn't happen anymore. Employers treat their employees good now. My reply to that referred back to the beginning of the conversation when I relayed a story of one of our members (who was left unnamed) that had taken a fall on the ice and was left laying on the ice for 20 minutes until the medically untrained boss could 'come out and check on him'. He had a broken back.

I said, "If that isn't abuse by the employer of an employee, I don't know what is!" I explained that was just one example, I could go on for the rest of the night telling stories of abuse. I said, "Did I tell ya the one about the guy that got fired for being left handed? The union saved his job."

I also explained to him not believe everything he hears on the news.

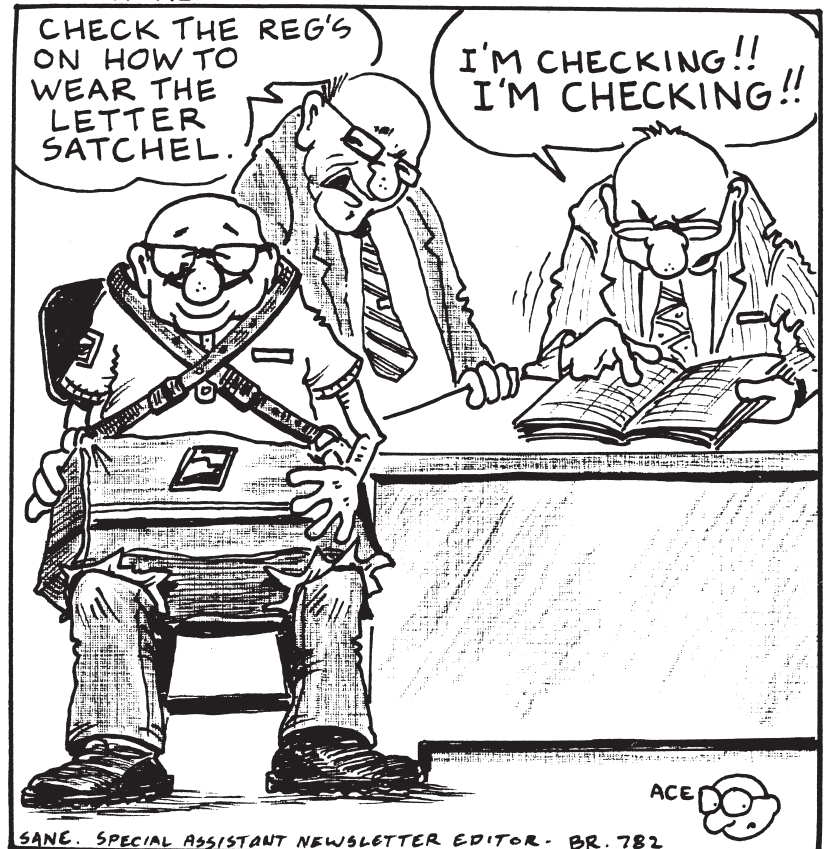
I explained the retiree pre-funding obligation stuck into the PAEA of 2006 by George W. Bush. If he was willing to listen, I was happy to explain it. The best way I have of getting that through to someone is to explain it like this: The Postal Service is REQUIRED by law to pay for retiree health benefits out to 75 years. That means we are currently funding health insurance for people who—not only do not work for the Postal Service yet—but *have yet to be BORN!*

My point this month?

You know the facts. Defend yourself. Defend your Brothers & Sisters. Educate people in a non-confrontational way. You know how to do it.

Article courtesy of the Rockford, Illinois  
NALC Branch 245 Newsletter published in August 2011.

## OUT THERE



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## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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After World War II the labor movement was strong as over 30% of all workers belonged to a union. American jobs were in demand and imagination was not a dirty word.

In the 1950's, McCarthyism came along with the threat of communist sympathizers listing many Americans as well as the American labor movement as "Commies". Unions were still strong 30% plus, mostly in building, manufacturing, and public sectors.

In the 1960's with the threat of communism strong and the draft still in effect America sent its troops to Vietnam to stop the spread of communism in the name of capitalism. The civil rights amendment was passed. Labor unions still flourished and minorities were given more opportunities. Still building, manufacturing, and public sectors.

In the 1970's there was an economic downturn and foreign cars were picking up sales in America. The computer age began and technology was the biggest gainer in jobs. The technology sector felt they were better off without unions so they could bargain their own salaries and did well for awhile. Union membership dropped during this time and manufacturing started being outsourced.

In the 1980's outsourcing became common and a funny thing happened. A Polish electrician jumped over a fence and said enough is enough. Lech Walesa was the defining moment when Russia's economy cracked and the Cold War ended. Some politicians tried to take credit, but it was the people who were responsible. Communism wasn't as much of a threat at that point.

In the 1990's the technology sector was in full strength and gained many more jobs than any other sector. Lopsided trade deals that traded off manufacturing jobs for American business interests began. The American trade movement saw a drop in unionized Americans down to 15 - 18 percent.

In the 2000's, trade with China and other communist nations like Vietnam were made without any regard for fairness. Business interest were allowed to write the deals and unions were locked out. America's high tech jobs along with any manufacturing jobs left were moved to India, China, or any place else where people were willing to work for peanuts.

This caused the biggest economic downturn since the great depression. Union membership dropped to under 10%.

This decade, it's going to be the decade to eliminate unions in this country. That is obvious. America is in a race to the bottom. The only minorities being favored by government are the millionaires and billionaires who now are called the job creators.

All I can say to the commie loving job creators who move our jobs overseas is how about leaving a few behind for the citizens of the country that keeps you safe so you can hoard your money!

In solidarity.

Barry Doherty

### THE BENEFITS THE USPS GIVES US

by Richard Tyler, NALC Branch 226

Anyone hired after 1971 could think that the Postal Service gives them all these great benefits that carriers receive. That is far removed from the truth.

Before the strike of 1970 we had only collective begging. We had to ask Congress to grant us a raise and that had to be approved by the President of the United States. We literally had to beg Congress to obtain a raise. During the years 1952 and 1960, Congress voted us a raise 8 years in a row. 8 years in a row, the raises were vetoed by President Eisenhower. Congress overrode the veto in 1960 and we only received a small raise of 2.1 percent. I believe that I was making less than \$3.00 an hour at that time. Most of us letter carriers had a second job just to get by on our salary. I had 3 jobs to compensate my income.

After the Postal Strike of 1970 we became the USPS and the NALC obtained the right to bargain for our benefits. Prior to 1971 we were not paid overtime. We were certainly not paid penalty overtime either. NALC got Carriers better health insurance, working conditions, uniform allowance, annual and sick leave as well as FMLA. Many other benefits came as a result of the efforts of NALC. All of us as Letter Carriers owe a debt of gratitude to the leaders of NALC for all of their efforts on our behalf. At the risk of sounding redundant, I will repeat myself. *THE POSTAL SERVICE DID NOT GIVE US ANY OF THESE BENEFITS, AS THEY WERE OBTAINED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BY THE NALC.*

Article excerpt from Forth Worth, TX Branch 226 *Panther City News*



# Guest Editorial

## “TO SERVE MAN”

-- by John Curtis, Branch 391, Central Maine

I remember an episode of the TV series The Twilight Zone “To Serve Man” that aired long ago in 1962, in which square-headed aliens from another galaxy landed on Earth. They claimed (like the tea-baggers of today?) to possess the know-how that would help humanity overcome its economic and social problems. A book they brought along fell into government hands. After grueling efforts, public employees (probably union members) were able to translate the book’s title: “To Serve Man.”

After this fact was made public, nearly everyone was overjoyed and believed the aliens truly intended to help humanity. As government workers kept laboring to decode the whole book, the aliens began transporting shiploads of eager earthlings to the alien home planet for “sightseeing.” Final decoding of the book revealed its true shocking purpose:

It was a cookbook.

Does this remind you of today in the real world? Unionized workers are #1 on the menu of CEO’s and bankers who caused the economic collapse with their reckless greed and abuse of power. They are funding and cheerleading the push in 18 states to shackle public-sector workers. They want working people to sacrifice wages, benefits, and their rights so the rich can continue to enjoy low (or no) taxes and avoid paying their fair share of necessary public expenses.

State workers are only the first dish on their menu. Postal workers will be in the frying pan soon enough. Will we take part in the militant struggle to defeat this latest fanatical anti-union offensive? Or will we board the alien vessels and go willingly to our demise?

Article courtesy of the South Bend, IN 330 Digest published in September 2011.

## Have You Written Your Congressman TODAY????

By Scott Dulas, Vice President and Chief Steward  
NALC Branch 114

If you value your wages, health benefits, the contract, or collective bargaining, you must write your Congressman today. It’s crunch time.

If you have never written your Congressman, **NOW** is the time. Even if you have written to him, **WRITE AGAIN**. Write *two* letters, one to his home office, and the other to his DC office. Tell them: Please cosponsor HR 1351 and HR 137 to save the USPS. Include any or all of the following:

HR 1351 would save the Postal Service by directing OPM to calculate the amount overpaid into the pension funds and transfer that to the Retiree Health Benefit Fund.

The 2006 congressional mandate to prepay 75 years worth of retiree health benefits in 10 years has caused the financial losses to the USPS in the last four years.

The USPS does not want a bailout, only to use our own funds to fix the problem.

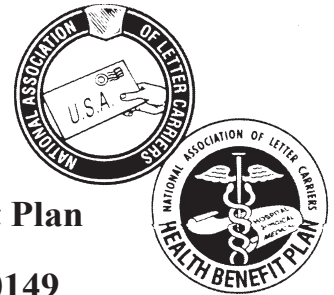
The loss of six day delivery would do more harm than good, by driving customers out of the mail system. The mailing industry is a **\$1.3 trillion** industry that supports between 7-8 million private sector jobs. Tell them you would like a response on whether they will co-sponsor HR 1351 and HR 137, because we need action not just words!

Have you written your Congressman today?

Article courtesy of the September 2011 Duluth, MN  
NALC Branch 114 X Zenith Branch News.

# 2011 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
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
<b>NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
<b>CIGNA Dental Discount Program</b>	<b>1-877-521-0244</b>
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
<b>Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)</b>	<b>(661) 631-8520</b>
<b>LabCorp Lab Services</b>	<b>(661) 631-9258</b>

**NALC Health Benefit Plan**  
**20547 Waverly Court**  
**Ashburn, Virginia 20149**

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

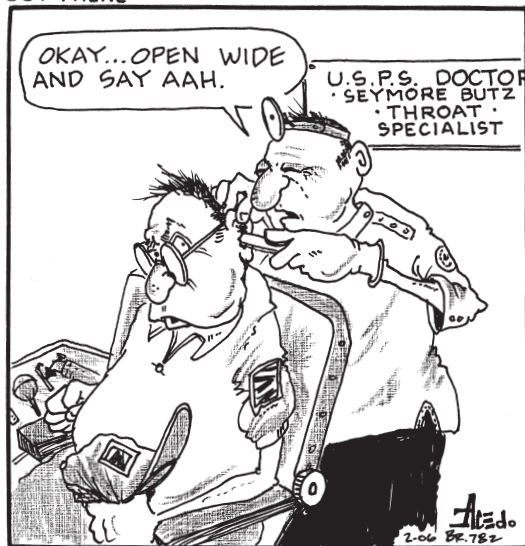
**NALC Drug Prescription**  
**"Claims" Program**  
**P.O. Box 521926**  
**Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2192**

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

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

**Preferred Provider**  
**(PPO) Deductible:**  
**\$300 Individual,**  
**\$600 Self & Family—**  
**Per Calendar Year**

OUT THERE



\* *Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by our Plan. MUST notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates.*

\*\* NALC Drug Prescription Program is **MANDATORY** generic (unless specified by your doctor, at additional cost to member). Preferred retail pharmacy 1st and 2nd fills, you pay 20% of cost of generic/30% of name brand. MAIL ORDER PRESCRIPTIONS when NALC is primary: 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand; 90 day supply \$5 for NALCSELECT generics (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$7.99 NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs), **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary); Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of cost for name brand, **MEDICARE PRIMARY** (mail order); 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 name brand; 90 day supply \$10 generic \$55 name brand; 90 day supply \$4 for NALCSELECT generic (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$4 for NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs); NALCSENIOR generic antibiotics are available; FREE for a 30 day supply, when Medicare is primary (certain antibiotics only).

**MAIL ORDER SPECIALTY DRUGS** (Bio-Tech drugs—**VERY EXPENSIVE**): **Your** cost for a 30 day supply is \$150; 60 day supply is \$250; and, 90 day supply is \$350. Some drugs (e.g. bio-tech asthma, diabetes, organ rejection, etc.) require prior approval before dispensing. You **MUST** call the Plan 1-800-237-2767.

**Mark Ramirez**  
**(661) 834-5011**  
**YOUR NALC Branch 782**  
**Health Benefits Representative**



Basil: I have a website that will allow our members to receive an email from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) on very helpful information!

If their vehicles cars, trucks, motorcycles—new or used—have a pending recall to repair faulty parts at the Auto Manufacturer's expense, this is an important safety issue. Just visit the above website, click on SIGN UP FOR RECALL ALERTS, select your vehicle make, model and year. Then enter your email address.

This will be a good benefit for those with used autos...as tracking down a used auto with multiple owners can make it difficult for a company to notify the latest owner that there is some kind of a problem. Otherwise you, as a new owner, might not be made aware of such recalls.

Providing an informational benefit to our members through our Branch 782 Union Newsletter.

MARK RAMIREZ  
Branch 782 HBP/MBA Representative



## For assistance with submission of traumatic injury or occupational disease claims, contact:

**Rick Gerdes at 661-834-2059 or "kgerdes91@hotmail.com"**

## from the editor-guy

Sometimes, people write something to present a concept. Maybe they want to argue a point or to describe an event..

This month, I'm writing this so share one specific memory. First, let me set the "scene" so that my memory will make a little more sense to you.

Through the years, I've walked more than a few picket lines. If you've never done that let me give you a relatively brief description of what my "walks" have been like.

Typically, by the time I arrive, someone is already walking. Some people carry signs. There is usually some singing. Often, there is someone with some kind of a sound-enhancing device (mega-phone/speaker system) and announcements pepper the air.

Somebody usually says, "Welcome and thanks for coming!" Sometimes, I've signed an attendance sheet and other-times I haven't.

As others join in, the crowd takes on a certain "mass" and a feeling of energy starts to kick in. The use of certain

words seems to be woven through this moving tapestry of color and sound that surges and shifts.

Those words are "Brother" and "Sister".

You are with people that—many times—you've never met. They may be members of another organization and you may not truly understand every nuance of their particular issue which is in dispute.

But, you are there to support them in their struggle whether they are Nurses, Carpenters, Communication Workers, or others. And, when you are there you often run into other Letter Carriers who are also there because they also understand that we a part of the larger Labor "family".

The context for every type of a picket is always that the event is an opportunity to present a "message" to the public. People who are not a part of the labor movement may not have any idea of the issues which are involved.

We may not have control of the media. We may not have deep pockets to buy billboards. But, what we do have is our energy and our commitment to become involved.

Okay, all of that was to put a frame on this memory "picture" that I want to share with you.

I got a phone call from Mike Towery on Tuesday morning. He asked if I would be willing to represent the Branch at an informational picket at Congressman Issa's office in Vista on Friday morning.



Congressman Issa hasn't made a secret of his intentions to radically change the way that the USPS operates. Many of those changes would impact current and future postal employees...as well as those who have already retired.

On the picket line, cars are always passing. There is a lot of honking of support by the drivers as they slow down to read the signs. Most of the cars that they drive are older, have a few scratches or even dents, and there are usually kids in the back seat.

And, what's this have to do with my memory? Well, I remember one guy—who drove by in a brand-new Mercedes-Benz. He flipped us off. And *THAT* is the issue in a nutshell...

BASIL ZUNIGA

# Stop Coddling the Super-Rich

## Editorial: The Truth About Taxes

By WARREN E. BUFFETT  
Published: August 14, 2011

OUR leaders have asked for “shared sacrifice.” But when they did the asking, they spared me. I checked with my mega-rich friends to learn what pain they were expecting. They, too, were left untouched.

While the poor and middle class fight for us in Afghanistan, and while most Americans struggle to make ends meet, we mega-rich continue to get our extraordinary tax breaks. Some of us are investment managers who earn billions from our daily labors but are allowed to classify our income as “carried interest,” thereby getting a bargain 15 percent tax rate. Others own stock index futures for 10 minutes and have 60 percent of their gain taxed at 15 percent, as if they’d been long-term investors.

These and other blessings are showered upon us by legislators in Washington who feel compelled to protect us, much as if we were spotted owls or some other endangered species. It’s nice to have friends in high places.

Last year my federal tax bill — the income tax I paid, as well as payroll taxes paid by me and on my behalf — was \$6,938,744. That sounds like a lot of money. But what I paid was only 17.4 percent of my taxable income — and that’s actually a lower percentage than was paid by any of the other 20 people in our office. Their tax burdens ranged from 33 percent to 41 percent and averaged 36 percent.

If you make money with money, as some of my super-rich friends do, your percentage may be a bit lower than mine. But if you earn money from a job, your percentage will surely exceed mine — most likely by a lot.

To understand why, you need to examine the sources of government revenue. Last year about 80 percent of these revenues came from personal income taxes and payroll taxes. The mega-rich pay income taxes at a rate of 15 percent on most of their earnings but pay practically nothing in payroll taxes. It’s a different story for the middle class: typically, they fall into the 15 percent and 25 percent income tax brackets, and then are hit with heavy payroll taxes to boot.

Back in the 1980s and 1990s, tax rates for the rich were far higher, and my percentage rate was in the middle of the pack. According to a theory I sometimes hear, I should have thrown a fit and refused to invest because of the elevated tax rates on capital gains and dividends.

I didn’t refuse, nor did others. I have worked with investors for 60 years and I have yet to see anyone — not even when capital gains rates were 39.9 percent in 1976-77 — shy away from a sensible investment because of the tax rate on the potential gain. People invest to make money, and potential taxes have never scared them off. And to those who argue that higher rates hurt job creation, I would note that a net of nearly 40 million jobs were added between 1980 and 2000. You know what’s happened since then: lower tax rates and far lower job creation.

Since 1992, the I.R.S. has compiled data from the returns of the 400 Americans reporting the largest income. In 1992, the top 400 had aggregate taxable income of \$16.9 billion and paid federal taxes of 29.2 percent on that sum. In 2008, the aggregate income of the highest 400 had soared to \$90.9 billion — a staggering \$227.4 million on average — but the rate paid had fallen to 21.5 percent.

The taxes I refer to here include only federal income tax, but you can be sure that any payroll tax for the 400 was inconsequential compared to income. In fact, 88 of the 400 in 2008 reported no wages at all, though every one of them reported capital gains. Some of my brethren may shun work but they all like to invest. (I can relate to that.)

I know well many of the mega-rich and, by and large, they are very decent people. They love America and appreciate the opportunity this country has given them. Many have joined the Giving Pledge, promising to give most of their wealth to philanthropy. Most wouldn’t mind being told to pay more in taxes as well, particularly when so many of their fellow citizens are truly suffering.

*Continued on next page...*



Twelve members of Congress will soon take on the crucial job of rearranging our country's finances. They've been instructed to devise a plan that reduces the 10-year deficit by at least \$1.5 trillion. It's vital, however, that they achieve far more than that. Americans are rapidly losing faith in the ability of Congress to deal with our country's fiscal problems. Only action that is immediate, real and very substantial will prevent that doubt from morphing into hopelessness. That feeling can create its own reality.

Job one for the 12 is to pare down some future promises that even a rich America can't fulfill. Big money must be saved here. The 12 should then turn to the issue of revenues. I would leave rates for 99.7 percent of taxpayers unchanged and continue the current 2-percentage-point reduction in the employee contribution to the payroll tax. This cut helps the poor and the middle class, who need every break they can get.

But for those making more than \$1 million — there were 236,883 such households in 2009 — I would raise rates immediately on taxable income in excess of \$1 million, including, of course, dividends and capital gains. And for those who make \$10 million or more — there were 8,274 in 2009 — I would suggest an additional increase in rate.

My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress. It's time for our government to get serious about shared sacrifice.

Warren E. Buffett is the chairman and chief executive of Berkshire Hathaway.

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## Richest Americans Can Help Fix Social Security: Perry Golkin

The debate on Social Security reform has reached an ideological stalemate, pitting collective responsibility to provide for the less fortunate against an individual's right to one's earnings and entitlements.

There is a way of dealing, at least partially, with the funding shortfall for Social Security that draws on the country's best traditions. That would be to encourage a voluntary waiver of benefits by affluent Americans.

To avoid the cynicism of those expecting government to waste the funds, all waived benefits would be deposited into a trust fund and passed on to future generations of retirees. The mechanism for making this contribution would be simple and inexpensive, a single line on Internal Revenue Service Form 1040, annually indicating a waiver of next year's benefits.

Many wealthy Americans, who know better than anyone the opportunities this country has provided, would respond to this appeal. In my informal polling of friends who are fortunate enough to be well-off, every one of them replied either "absolutely" or "probably," when I asked if they would be willing to forgo their Social Security benefits in an effort to reduce the federal debt. While my sample isn't numerically significant, it does suggest a sensibility that is encouraging and worth exploring.

### Making a Pledge

Last year, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett challenged 400 of the richest Americans to pledge half of their fortunes to their favorite causes either during their lifetimes or in their wills. It established a new cultural standard for the wealthiest Americans. A similar one could be created in this case, but it, too, would have to be voluntary -- encouraged by peers rather than demanded or required by others.

Social Security was conceived as a means of providing financial assistance to "aged needy individuals," not as a monthly stipend for the rich. Today, there are millions of Americans who would be considered high-net-worth individuals, and they will live, on average, well past the age of retirement. According to Boston Consulting Group, in 2011 the U.S. had "by far the most millionaire households (5.2 million)" in the world this year. At

70 years of age, even the wealthiest of them will be entitled today to payments in excess of \$38,000 a year.

### Held in Reserve

I estimate the impact of a voluntary program at \$1 trillion over three decades. Here's the calculation. If 1 million of the rich waive their Social Security benefits for one year, the annual reduction in payments, net of taxes, would be at least \$20 billion. If this occurred each year for the next 30 years, the trust fund would have \$600 billion. If the funds were held for 30 years and earned 3.5 percent annually over this period, the interest earned would result in an additional \$400 billion. A total of \$1 trillion of cash would be available for the next generation if we had the discipline to wait 30 years. The Social Security Administration couldn't pay out benefits from this fund until a specified date, for example, 2040.

As compelling as the economic rationale might be, the moral imperative is equally important. This proposal can bridge the ideological gap because people aren't required to violate their principles. Many wealthy business people already give away far more than \$38,000 annually to charity, and were this proposal adopted it could become part of their voluntary giving while helping to solve our nation's debt crisis. This program will allow the best of the American spirit to shine through and perhaps tone down the rage against the rich and against bloated government.

Volunteerism and generosity have long been part of the national character, and virtually everyone cares about the well-being of the world that their children and grandchildren will inherit. The question I would pose to policy makers is: How much faith do you have in the American people?

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(Perry Golkin is an advisory partner at Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., where he was previously a partner or member for 24 years. He is also a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and law school. The opinions expressed are his own.) To contact the writer of this article: Perry Golkin at [perry.golkin@kkv.com](mailto:perry.golkin@kkv.com)

# A very interesting column.. COMPLETELY NEUTRAL Be sure to Read the Poem at the end.

Charley Reese's final column for the *Orlando Sentinel*... He had been a journalist for 49 years. He retired and this was HIS LAST COLUMN.

Be sure to read the Tax List at the end.

This is about as clear and easy to understand as it can be. The article below is completely neutral, neither anti-republican or democrat. Charlie Reese, a retired reporter for the *Orlando Sentinel*, has hit the nail directly on the head, defining clearly who it is that in the final analysis must assume responsibility for the judgments made that impact each one of us every day. It's a short but good read. Worth the time. Worth remembering!

## 545 vs. 300,000,000 People

-By Charlie Reese

Politicians are the only people in the world who create problems and then campaign against them.

Have you ever wondered, if both the Democrats and the Republicans are against deficits, WHY do we have deficits?

Have you ever wondered, if all the politicians are against inflation and high taxes, WHY do we have inflation and high taxes?

You and I don't propose a federal budget. The President does.

You and I don't have the Constitutional authority to vote on appropriations. The House of Representatives does.

You and I don't write the tax code, Congress does.

You and I don't set fiscal policy, Congress does.

You and I don't control monetary policy, the Federal Reserve Bank does.

One hundred senators, 435 congressmen, one President, and nine Supreme Court justices equates to 545 human beings out of the 300 million are directly, legally, morally, and individually responsible for the domestic problems that plague this country.

I excluded the members of the Federal Reserve Board because that problem was created by the Congress. In 1913, Congress delegated its Constitutional duty to provide a sound currency to a federally chartered, but private, central bank.

I excluded all the special interests and lobbyists for a sound reason. They have no legal authority. They have no ability to

coerce a senator, a congressman, or a President to do one cotton-picking thing. I don't care if they offer a politician \$1 million dollars in cash. The politician has the power to accept or reject it. No matter what the lobbyist promises, it is the legislator's responsibility to determine how he votes.

Those 545 human beings spend much of their energy convincing you that what they did is not their fault. They cooperate in this common con regardless of party.

What separates a politician from a normal human being is an excessive amount of gall. No normal human being would have the gall of a Speaker, who stood up and criticized the President for creating deficits. The President can only propose a budget. He cannot force the Congress to accept it.

The Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, gives sole responsibility to the House of Representatives for originating and approving appropriations and taxes. Who is the speaker of the House now? He is the leader of the majority party. He and fellow House members, not the President, can approve any budget they want. If the President vetoes it, they can pass it over his veto if they agree to.

It seems inconceivable to me that a nation of 300 million cannot replace 545 people who stand convicted -- by present facts -- of incompetence and irresponsibility. I can't think of a single domestic problem that is not traceable directly to those 545 people.. When you fully grasp the plain truth that 545 people exercise the power of the federal government, then it must follow that what exists is what they want to exist.

If the tax code is unfair, it's because they want it unfair.

*Continued on next page...*



If the budget is in the red, it's because they want it in the red.

"politics" that prevent them from doing what they take an oath to do.

If the Army & Marines are in Iraq and Afghanistan it's because they want them in Iraq and Afghanistan ...

Those 545 people, and they alone, are responsible.

If they do not receive social security but are on an elite retirement plan not available to the people, it's because they want it that way.

They, and they alone, have the power.

There are no insoluble government problems.

They, and they alone, should be held accountable by the people who are their bosses. Provided the voters have the gumption to manage their own employees...

Do not let these 545 people shift the blame to bureaucrats, whom they hire and whose jobs they can abolish; to lobbyists, whose gifts and advice they can reject; to regulators, to whom they give the power to regulate and from whom they can take this power. Above all, do not let them con you into the belief that there exists disembodied mystical forces like "the economy," "inflation," or

We should vote all of them out of office and clean up their mess!

What you do with this article now that you have read it... is up to you. This might be funny if it weren't so true. Be sure to read all the way to the end:

Tax his land,  
Tax his bed,  
Tax the table,  
At which he's fed.

Tax all he has  
Then let him know  
That you won't be done  
Till he has no dough.

cents per gallon)  
Gross Receipts Tax  
Hunting License Tax  
Inheritance Tax  
Inventory Tax  
IRS Interest Charges IRS Penalties

**STILL THINK  
THIS IS FUNNY?**

Tax his tractor,  
Tax his mule,  
Teach him taxes  
Are the rule.

When he screams and hollers;  
Then tax him some more,  
Tax him till  
He's good and sore.

(tax on top of tax)  
Liquor Tax  
Luxury Taxes  
Marriage License Tax

*Not one of these taxes existed 100 years ago, & our nation was the most prosperous in the world.*

Tax his work,  
Tax his pay,  
He works for  
peanuts anyway!

Then tax his coffin,  
Tax his grave,  
Tax the sod in  
Which he's laid...

Medicare Tax  
Personal Property Tax  
Property Tax  
Real Estate Tax  
Service Charge Tax  
Social Security Tax  
Road Usage Tax  
Recreational Vehicle Tax  
Sales Tax  
School Tax

*We had absolutely no national debt, had the largest middle class in the world, and Mom, if she agreed, stayed home to raise the kids.*

Tax his cow,  
Tax his goat,  
Tax his pants,  
Tax his coat.

Put these words  
Upon his tomb,  
'Taxes drove me  
to my doom...'

State Income Tax  
State Unemployment Tax (SUTA)  
Telephone Federal Excise Tax  
Telephone Federal Universal Service Fee Tax

*What in the heck happened? Can you spell 'politicians?'*

Tax his tobacco,  
Tax his drink,  
Tax him if he  
Tries to think.

Accounts Receivable Tax  
Building Permit Tax  
CDL license Tax  
Cigarette Tax  
Corporate Income Tax

Telephone Federal, State and Local Surcharge Taxes  
Telephone Minimum Usage Surcharge Tax

*I hope this goes around THE USA at least 545 times!!! YOU can help it get there!!!*

Tax his cigars,  
Tax his beers,  
If he cries  
Tax his tears.

Dog License Tax  
Excise Taxes  
Federal Income Tax  
Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA)

Telephone Recurring and Nonrecurring Charges Tax  
Telephone State and Local Tax  
Telephone Usage Charge Tax  
Utility Taxes

**GO AHEAD. . . BE  
AN AMERICAN!!!**

Tax his car,  
Tax his gas,  
Find other ways  
To tax his ass.

Fishing License Tax  
Food License Tax  
Fuel Permit Tax  
Gasoline Tax (currently 44.75

Vehicle License Registration Tax  
Vehicle Sales Tax  
Watercraft Registration Tax  
Well Permit Tax  
Workers Compensation Tax



FACE PAINTING & BALLOON ANIMALS

**N.A.L.C.**

**BRANCH 782'S**

SNOW CONES

50/50 DRAWING

# ***ANNUAL PICNIC***

## **Sunday October 9, 2011**

**Jastro Park (section 1)**

**10am - 2pm**

GAMES

**Arriving from 11am - 1pm**

**MEMBERS & HOUSEHOLD    \$FREE**

**GUESTS                            \$10.00**

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT TERESA ORTEGA @ 661-2013086**

## WHAT DOES MY 3999 SAY?

*By Secretary Dave Durocher*

Your 3999 is one of the most important pieces of the JARAP process.

As a steward, almost every time I hand a carrier their latest 3999, they look at and ask, “what does it say?” or, “I don’t know what I’m looking at.” I’d like to give you a quick lesson in this article.

Your 3999 is a record of everything you did on the day the Supervisor rode with you, from loading your truck, driving to your route, delivering the mail, and even logging how long it took you to go to the bathroom. If you talk to a customer, or get a personal phone call, it’s all accounted for on the 3999.

What should you be looking for when you are asked to review your 3999; for starters, any disallowed time. This could be “waiting time” or “Management time” or “other time”. You will find these terms written on the line where every street is listed, under “block number and street name”. This time will be removed from your total street time. Any time disallowed should be logged in the “Audit Trail Report”. This report should be a cover letter on your edited version of your 3999. You should receive an unedited version, and an edited version of your 3999. The regular carrier on the route must review EVERY 3999 done after 3/22/11. When reviewing both versions of the 3999, compare the times, and notify your steward if you find any discrepancies unaccounted for.

Disallowed time when the Supervisor has to discuss something with you may happen, but, the Supervisor changing the way you’re working, is not allowed during the 3999. Disallowed time because you lost a contact or got a personal phone call may also be disallowed, this should not happen every day. Also, any backtracking for a missed delivery, or any time over 10 minutes for your street break, or 30 minutes for your lunch break will be disallowed, except if allowed in your local agreement for wash up time.

Personal needs time is allowed within reason, and should be allowed. Be sure there is relay time if you deliver to NDCBU’s or park and loop. Every block face shows the exact time you entered the block face and actual time used.

If you see something you’re not sure about, ask questions, as the 3999 gives a time value to every block face in your delivery area. As the old adage goes, garbage in – garbage out....

Dave

Article courtesy of the August 2011 *Suncoast Letter Carrier’s Update* published by NALC Branch 2008 in Tarpon Springs, FL

**NALC Branch 782 Editor-guy Note:** Much of this newsletter has been geared at presenting information about the political issues which must be dealt with. But—believe it or not—*YOU* also have to do the best you can to “take care of business” *each and every day* that you deliver the mail. This is an important thing that only *YOU* can do to protect yourself...



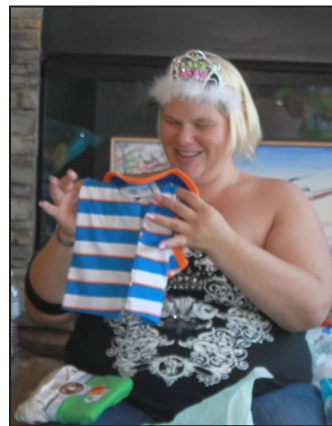
# Who Needs a Reason to Throw a Party??

The girls of South Station normally don't need a reason to have a party, but on the Saturday afternoon of July 24th, we got together (with a few of our male co-workers) to celebrate the anticipation of a new baby!

Deven Patterson became a new mommy to little Christian Williams on September 6th. On his birthday, he came into the world at 6 pounds 15 ounces, twenty inches long, and with a full head of hair. Now, Deven's days (and nights) are centered on her bundle of joy!

But, back to the party! Letter Carrier Debra Harvey (and her husband, Doug) graciously opened her home to about a dozen friends and co-workers to "Oooh! and Awwh!" at the opening

of the gifts. There was a definite competitive spirit as games were played. Doug manned the BBQ grilling—with the "supervision" of Darryl Holderman and Basil Zuniga. Doug is a great cook and made lots of yummy food for all of us!



South Station took up a collection and put it towards a crib for little Christian. It was a fun afternoon and everybody enjoyed the food, conversations and laughs. A special thanks to Debra and Doug Harvey!

Next party? John and Annette are having a wedding... Just sayin'... By the way, Basil says that the web-version of the newsletter will have a whole lot more pictures than he was able to fit in the print version. Check them out!!

ANITA HOLDERMAN

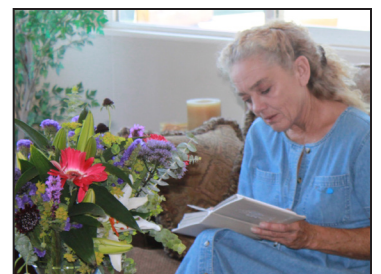


## Really!! Who Needs a Reason to Throw a Party?

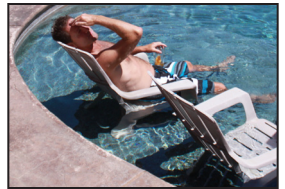




# Really!! Who Needs a Reason to Throw a Party?







Even if it wasn't *THAT* kind of a party...you wouldn't have known it once Doug and Darryl got in the water.

Girls came running out of the house, clutching those one dollar bills, as they encouraged the guys to give them a show!





# A Brooklyn Carrier Now

- Andrea de Majewski -

On my first day reporting to work at Cadman Station, Brooklyn, I was pretty nervous. I'd been carrying mail in Seattle for twelve years, but I didn't know what to expect here, and something about New York postal culture seemed awfully intimidating. Right away I was put at ease when I saw that my supervisor had no idea what was going on, just like in Seattle. You'll have to provide your own Brooklyn accent here:

"Who are you? A transfer? I wasn't expecting you. Well, you can do that route," she pointed to the case right behind her desk, "It's easy."

That was the beginning and end of my welcome, orientation, training, etc. With a lot of help from my co-workers (more on them later) I managed to get the route "racked" (Brooklyn for cased) "tied out" (pulled down) and put on "skids" (dollies you put your labeled bags of mail on for truck drivers to take to relay boxes), then find my way with my handcart to my first delivery, get the route done, and find my way back to the station. Also with co-worker assistance, I've been able to lobby the right people to get a timecard. No badge yet (I have to show my Seattle badge to get past the guard at the back door), no locker, and my name is never on the schedule.

All in all, it's the same job – sticking mostly bulk mail in mostly too small mailboxes. All the routes are apartments and businesses, all are walking routes, and the truck drivers deliver not only to your relay boxes but all your drops and non-spur parcels. There's lots of key work, because many of the buildings are brownstones or small apartment blocks, with four to twenty boxes in the lobby. Only one key though, the old style or "arrow" key. No zone key.

In the a.m. portion of the day, the differences are more plentiful, but not that significant for the most part. One thing that's irritating is that as a PTF, I am assigned clerk work sometimes. When I got back to the station on Friday I was told to spread a pallet of IKEA's. (Back-breaking work, by the way. Gotta hand it to the clerks.) In general though, there seem to be less coverages. No advo, saving source, or any crap like that.

Speaking of crap, there also seem to be no stand-ups. Instead, the supervisor is constantly droning over the p.a., all morning long. She tells us when to go on break and when it's over. When to "sweep our cases" (each route has six hotcases). She doesn't come around for commitments, but calls people to her desk one at a time, where they discuss how much undertime they can do that day.

Oh, did I mention that most carriers carry undertime on most days? There's still the usual level of grumbling and hassles, but the difference is that the default expectation (for everybody) is set toward the assumption of undertime, not overtime. Most carriers carry an average of an hour of undertime a day, as far as I can tell. And by and large, people have a good attitude about carrying undertime and work in general. Although it runs counter to the stereotype, the truth is that carriers here are upbeat, extremely friendly, and hard-working.

Some other random notes and then I'll shut up. T-6's are called "U-men" or "U-routers." Uniform standards are quite relaxed. It seems that one item of postal "flair" is all that's necessary – the shorts, the shirt, maybe just an apron. There is no drinking water available at the station, except from the bathroom tap. One carrier, Loretta, who's daughter also carries mail there, sells bottled water at her case (at cost). Hello, OSHA?

*Thanks for reading.*

*Your Brooklyn Postal Pen Pal,*

*Andrea de Majewski*



**East Union Alum Demajewski and Some of her  
New NY coworkers, members Branch 41**

Article courtesy of the Seattle, WA September 2011  
*Seventy-Niner* published by NALC Branch 79.

# A Birthday Breakfast with Basil Zuniga??



*You might have questions?*  
**I'VE GOT ANSWERS...**

Noriega's is located at 525 Sumner Street  
in Bakersfield and it is a Basque Restaurant.

7:00 a.m. (or 0700 in USPS time)??? Wait a minute!!!  
On a **SUNDAY** morning? Are you kidding???

Nope. This is when breakfast is served. And—*ONLY* if you want—you can join us...

*SO, WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST??* Omelette or Fried Eggs,  
Potatoes, Basque Sausage or Bacon or Ham, Salsa, Bread, Jack  
Cheese. Also includes Wine\* or Coffee.

**The cost: \$10.00**

\* Wine. Wine? Yes, wine. With breakfast? Yes. That's part of the "ambiance".  
And, yes, wine with breakfast makes for a really relaxing "after-breakfast" nap!!

The Noriega Hotel was founded by Faustino Noriega in 1893. Taken over in 1931 by Juan and Gracianna Elizalde and has been operated by her family ever since. The original Hotel, after many years, became a boarding house for men only. In 1940 the restaurant business was such that it became necessary to expand, and the present bar and dining room were added. The Noriega Hotel is still the hub of the Basque community and continues to serve exceptional meals to the public as well.

*And, no. Basil is not Basque. But—like Jimi Hendrix—he discovered that wine with breakfast with the Basque people can be a path to enlightenment...*

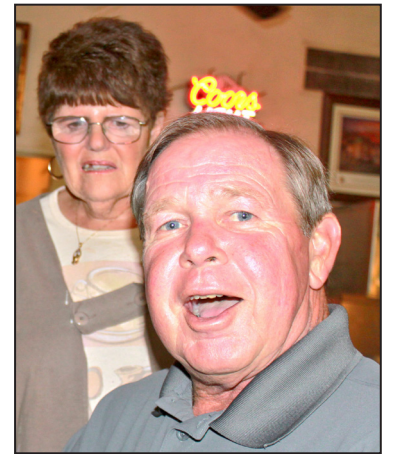
# August 28, 2011



Contact Darryl Holderman (661-332-9201) for more details!



# Who Needs a Reason to Throw a Party??



Pictures courtesy of Anita Holderman





*For us, it was a lot of fun. For the staff at Noriega's, we were a lot of work... Thank you for taking care of us!!!*



# The President's Message

by Phillip Capuano, NALC Branch 737

I would like to start this article by addressing the recent excessing that took place at the Irvine installation. 14 letter carriers were excessed out of the Irvine installation to other stations, which those carriers chose by their own preferences, based on seniority. The majority of carriers received their first choice of installation to be excessed into. Of the 14 letter carriers, 4 carriers volunteered to go in lieu of the impacted employees. The Union did initiate a grievance based on the excessing, as we previously did when management excessed two employees to surrounding cities. Even though these two employees volunteered for the two impacted employees, according to the PTF hours which we have been receiving, the hours, in our opinion, have not been reduced enough to necessitate excessing. This is similar to the excessing that took place around July 2, 2011. Although the contract says that the PTF hours must be reduced prior to excessing, it does not specifically say the percentage of hours that the PTF hours must be reduced by. Further, even if management did it properly, the reduction of hours are only for 30 days prior to excessing, and 30 days after the impacted employees left. Therefore, if management decided to increase the PTF hours after the 30 days, there would be no violation of the Article 12 excessing rule. The reduction of PTF hours is not permanent- again it is only 30 days prior to and 30 days after.

Along this same line of PTF hours, there are carriers who have been bringing it to the Union's attention that the PTFs are getting more hours than they are. This may be true, but there is no contractual violation of article 8. Most of these PTF hours are accumulated with overtime. Nobody is entitled to the overtime first. However, with PTFs, management has more flexibility in scheduling. One concern of ours that we have brought to the attention of management are those carriers on the Overtime Desired List who are below the average during the quarter. We have recommended that management utilizes the OTDL employees instead of the PTFs, because at the end of the quarter, if those carriers fall below the average, and the Union can identify opportunities that those employees could have worked, then the carriers are compensated. It would benefit management to distribute that overtime equitably out to those OTDL employees. Again, they are not contractually obligated to do so- it just makes good business sense.

As a final note on the involuntary excessing of employees under Article 12, the Union disagrees with management excessing these employees. A grievance has been filed, and will be appealed to the Step B parties for resolution or appealed to arbitration.

Management recently has begun utilizing the Flat Sorting Sequence machines in Irvine. This was done during the month of May. Within a week or two, management turned on the COR system in all 3 stations in Irvine. COR (Carrier Optimal Routing) is a system designed to help reduce route in certain units. It takes travel time, relay time, allied time, and tries to square off as many routes as possible, and eliminate excess time. In some cases, routes can be eliminated using this process. It also takes into consideration the speed limits on certain streets, stop signs, traffic lights, etc. It is the Union's position that these adjustments with COR that were conducted in the Irvine installation were not done properly. According to the memorandum M-01661, management is required to perform adjustments with COR according to the M.39 chapter 2. What does this mean? Management is required to perform a formal route count and inspection over 6 days. Every piece of mail must be counted. YOU count the mail for one week, and management counts the mail for one day and walks with you on that one given day (the "day of inspection"). Management in Irvine did not conduct their route counts in this manner. Management believes that they can do a "half count", don't complete any 3999s, and adjust the routes

any way they would like. In this COR route adjustment, the Union **did not** have any say in the route adjustments, unlike how the Union has had in the past. From past experience, we know that we cannot please everyone in a formal route adjustment. However, there is one thing we make sure of- if a route must be abolished or changed, the Union will do its utmost to protect seniority, and minimize the impact in an office when the Union invokes Article 41.3.O, and do its utmost to identify junior route, so the impact is minimized. This is exactly what did not take place in the Irvine installation. Management did not take seniority into consideration, and abolished senior letter carrier's routes, where the Union had to invoke Article 41.3.O to protect the carrier's seniority. This is what happens when the Union has no say in the route adjustment process- management does things unilaterally, which they normally like doing, but tends to cause havoc among the workforce. Whether or not management believes that they can make adjustments without a formal 6 day route count, based on the implementation of FSS, because the FSS memorandum, M-01643, management can adjust routes "any way they want". The problem with this position for management is that, once they turned on COR, and they are not using the JARAP process, management **MUST** perform a formal 6 day route count. At this time, the Union has filed a grievance in each affected station. The Union is not requesting for the routes to be put back the way they were before the adjustments- this would be too unrealistic. The Union is requesting of management to perform proper formal route counts on each route in their office, regardless whether it is 8 hours or more, over a 6 day period, so they can have accurate data to adjust routes. Because if management were to perform the route count properly when they should have, management would have to take the week of inspection, because as letter carriers, we were not using the same work method we used prior to FSS being implemented. We would now be handling flats differently, as we did in the previous months. What management did in this instance, they took the other weeks where carriers did not handle FSS on the street, and adjusted routes to 8 hours based on that data. It is not a true reflection of how a letter carrier handles FSS mail on the street. The street times would have been much longer than the prior weeks they identified and used. This would have also applied to territory transfers from form 3999 on the date of inspection. Management used the former form 3999s to transfer territory prior to the implementation of FSS. Those street times would therefore be invalid as well.

In closing, like I mentioned above, these issues have been addressed in the grievance procedure. The Union believes that management did violate the COR memorandum M-01661 and chapter 2 of the M.39, regarding formal route counts and inspection. Those grievances have been appealed to the Step B level for resolution.

Again, as a reminder, management does perform "street blitzes" anywhere from 1-2 times per week. The purpose of this "street blitz" is to make sure carriers are performing their jobs in a safe manner, and performing the job correctly, and to make sure carriers are not getting done sooner than they said they would be done. In some offices, management will not hesitate to put a letter carrier on emergency placement if they found them performing an unsafe act, and, in some cases, issue a notice of removal. I don't think any letter carrier can afford to be out from 6-8 months without pay, waiting for their grievance to be heard. If appealed to arbitration, it could be even longer. It's not worth it to have our engine running as you are outside of your vehicle or to have your door open while the vehicle is in motion, driving without a seat belt, or driving while using a cell phone. It doesn't take much time to close the door, fasten your seat belt, and turn off your engine when you are outside of your vehicle, and to not use your cell phone when driving (it's against the law anyway!)

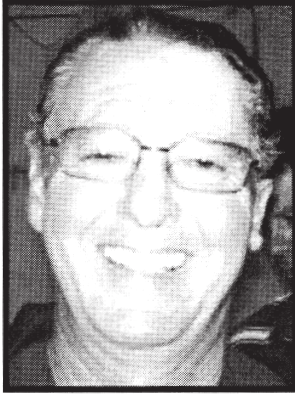
Keep on enjoying your summer!

Article courtesy of the July-August-September 2011 Santa Ana, CA *Anthony B. Morell Branch News* published by NALC Branch 737

**NALC Branch 782 Editor-guy Note:**

Sometimes, it is a good thing to know that "there is a world out there"... Just because you aren't dealing with excessing and other issues desn't mean you never will have to. This is a long article to read, but you might gain some valuable information.





## "Woody's World" *By John Wood*

I work in a postal factory. We're not people; we're just robots only there to case and deliver the mail as quickly as we can. Management tries to push us out the door as soon as possible. Safety, respect, common sense, all are just considered a waste of time to them. The only goal is for us to carry our routes and extra and be back in 8 hours or less. There is no human connection, no bond. It's just go, go, go; be back on time, and you better not get hurt. Grievance? You better not file a grievance or you'll be on the sh\*\*list. I remember when this job was fun, that we came in and did our jobs and went home, and that we wanted to come back the next day. Now you don't want to come back the next day, you dread it, because the nightmare starts all over again. You've all heard it, the Post Office is going broke, we're not going to deliver on Saturday, we're all going to have to do more. Well, I'm tired of doing more, what is management doing? Are they doing more? Why aren't their positions being cut? JARAP has cut ours, why not theirs? If there are fewer routes, why not fewer supervisors? If you don't touch the mail, you're overhead!

I know that the Postal Service is going through tough times. I'm aware of the drop in volume. But does management have to be stupid and cut back on the PTF/TE hours and force non ODLs to work overtime? It seems to me that they are trying to go broke and go out of business. I've been with this company long enough to see that their directives are dumb, and that they should listen to their most valuable resource, their employees. Wait a minute, though, that makes sense. They are sure not to do that! Postal commonsense does not exist. If it makes sense to them, it must be wrong. I'm just grateful I can retire when I want to, that I'm not like a lot of other carriers who have a long way to go. I just wish that they would get more involved, i.e., donate to COLCPE, contact their representatives, come to union meetings, be active! But then again, like my Dad use to say, "wish in one hand, sh\*\* in the other, see which one fills up quicker!"

Article courtesy of the Tarpon Springs, FL *Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update* published in August 2011 by NALC Branch 2008

# A New Way to Connect with the Customers

by Kathleen Kirton, NALC Branch 36

Letter Carrier Vincent Carannante, a 39-year veteran of the Postal Service, works at Peck Slip Station.

Mr. Carannante's route is totally residential, but that did not discourage him from participating in the Customer Connect Program. He came up with an inventive way to generate revenue. Mr. Carannante approached building management with his idea, stating it would benefit both the building as well as the Postal Service. Building management not only agreed, but provided him with room so that he could set up his mini postal center.

In November of 2009 the mini postal center was opened in the mailroom at 2 Gold Street. The tenants at 2 Gold, amazed at the convenience of the postal supplies, have utilized flat rate boxes, flat rate envelopes, express, certified and confirmation forms. They can pack their parcels and pay for them with click and ship and either leave them with the concierge to be picked up or personally hand their packages to Mr. Carannante.

Some tenants have switched from competitors to the Postal Service because of the convenience.

Single-handedly Mr. Carannante restocks his mini postal center daily. He can't give a specific account of the revenue that's been generated, but from November, 2009 to the present he's positive thousands of flat rate boxes as well as other supplies have been utilized.

When asked what motivated him to begin this project, he stated he will be retiring soon and he wanted to help provide a future for new employees beginning their careers and to encourage customers to use the United States Postal Service. Special thanks are extended to Mr. Vincent Carannante for his determination and dedication in perfecting the Customer Service Program by taking it to the next level.

Article courtesy of the August 2011 New York City, NY  
*NEW YORK LETTER CARRIERS' OUTLOOK*  
published by NALC Branch 36.

# Remembering September 11th

By Ron Brown

It was Tuesday, September 11, 2001. This day started off just like any other day at NALC Headquarters. My wife had gone home over the weekend to be with our daughter who was about to give birth to our third grandchild and what was to be our first granddaughter.

I left my apartment shortly after 6:00a.m. to pick up Executive Vice President Young and proceed to the office. We always went to the office early because one of us always drove the 30 minutes to downtown Washington. It was about a 30 minute drive early in the morning but an hour and half drive if we left much later.

We got to our respective offices around 6:45a.m. after picking up the morning paper from the security guard. This was a good time to be in the office as it was quiet with no phones ringing and no one coming in and out. The other officers would be coming in at various times and we would all end up in the cafeteria around 8:00a.m.

On my way from the cafeteria to my office I passed by the Director of Safety and Health's office and our Director Al Ferranto called me into his office and he said that a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center building. As we continued to watch his TV moments later the second plane crashed into the second tower. I turned to Al and said "this is no accident".

I immediately went to the Executive Vice Presidents office and told him what had happened and together we entered the President's office and asked him to turn on his TV and the other officers were called in and we just stood there and watched in silence.

During this time period, which is relatively short, about an hour and a quarter, three planes have crashed into buildings and one has crashed in Pennsylvania on the way to Washington. The rumors are running rampant about terrorist acts in the Washington, D.C. area, most are proven not to be true.

I don't think it really hit home until the Pentagon building was hit and you could see the smoke from our building roof top. Looking outside of my office window and seeing absolute grid-lock on the streets. Armed military walking the streets and standing guard on the corners really brought home the fact that this city was under siege.

Sometime during the morning hours I called home and assured my wife that everything was ok so far. The President told the staff and secretaries that they could go home if they wished. Some of them had family and friends working in various government buildings and was truly concerned about their safety as rumors of bombs and fires in some of these government buildings had been set.

All of the Officers stayed until later in the afternoon as traveling by car would have been almost impossible in the beginning.

In the days ahead it was sometimes difficult getting to and from the office since we are located across the street from the Capitol building. Every day we would see someone pulled aside and being inspected. These inspections were usually conducted on vans and cube trucks. At one time no vans or trucks were allowed in certain zones.

Every night we could hear and see the AWACS flying above our apartment reminding us that the threat of attack was still there. During this time period I experienced many

emotions, as I am sure most did. I was saddened by the loss of innocent lives and families forever scared. I was saddened that my country, our country had been struck so hard by just a few ignorant cowards.

I knew that we would have to respond to these attacks I just hoped it would be swift and correct. Swift it was but I personally do not believe it was the correct way.

On September 18, 2001 we were attacked a different way and this attack was even closer to home, it hit the Postal Service with Anthrax at the Brentwood Postal facility. I think we should all commend the actions of the Unions and especially our Director of Safety and Health, Al Ferranto. He worked long hours each day meeting with the Postal Service and many other agencies to protect the mail and employees. This went on for several months and it took almost a year just to clean the Brentwood office and the many other mail facilities that were affected. Letters containing anthrax spores were mailed to several news media offices and two Democratic U.S. Senators, killing five people and infecting 17 others. According to the FBI, the ensuing investigation became "one of the largest and most complex in the history of law enforcement."

During my time as an activist in this great Union starting off as the safety officer in Branch 3126 up to Vice President of the National organization I have experienced some memorable times. The vast majority were good i.e. Postal Strike March, 1970. As it is said the "good ones" you forget but the "bad ones" linger on. November 14, 1991, Royal Oak shooting, September, 11, 2001 World Trade Center, September 18, 2001, Anthrax. Good memories don't leave scars but bad ones do.

This is an especially poignant article which originally appeared in the Royal Oak, MI August 2011 NALC Branch 3126 *New Vision*...



## Ernest C. Alvarado August 16, 1924 - August 19, 2011 “Ernie’s Gone Fishin”

Visitation for “Ernie” Alvarado was held at Delano Mortuary on August 25, 2011 with the Rosary recital and a Mass of the Christian Burial held at St. Mary’s Catholic church on Friday, August 26, 2011 and interment at Delano Cemetery.

Ernest was born in Delano, California to Natalia C. Sanchez on August 16, 1924 and spent his entire life in Delano. He passed away with his family by his side on August 19, 2011.

Ernest was inducted into the US Army early in 1945 and received numerous medals while serving in Japan and the Philippines. After fulfilling his commitment to our country, he was discharged in November 1946 and returned to Delano where he worked at a variety of locations including a lumber yard and a hardware store.

More importantly, after he returned home, Ernest met and married the love of his life, Carmen Canales Alvarado, when she was 19; and—when he died—*they were two weeks short of celebrating 60 years of marriage on September 1, 2011!*

His parish, St. Mary’s, was an important part of his life. When he grew up, his mother lived next door to the “old” St. Mary’s Church and he grew up participating in many of the activities at the church. He was a “cradle-to-grave” St. Mary’s Catholic. After his marriage in that church, his two daughters were both baptized by Father Alabart and were eventually enrolled at the now-closed St. Mary’s Catholic School. But...this was long after he and Carmen lived in his old home as newlyweds and where his mother taught his new wife how to cook the meals that Ernest had grown up with and really liked to eat.

He was encouraged by many of his life-long friends to see if he could get hired by the Post Office. After passing his Civil Service test, Ernest started his postal career as a Letter Carrier in Delano, CA in 1961 and retired after 23 years. When he retired, he was delivering to downtown Delano and—despite being bitten by dogs a few times—really enjoyed all of the years that he spent delivering mail to the people who lived in his hometown.

He is survived by his wife, Carmen, and his two daughters: Carolyn Alvarado of Delano, CA, and Cathy Alvarado of La Mesa, CA and many other family members. Pall bearers included retired Letter Carriers Rudy Rivera and Armando Jimenez. Some other names of people who worked with Ernest were Richard Troncozo, Rudy Rivera, and Dave “Teo” Moreno. Ernie Gutierrez is the only one who hasn’t retired yet. (And, although he has also passed away, Roy Shangle was the first post officer supervisor that Ernest had after he was hired.) Some other folks who were part of his postal life were: Richard Rodriguez and Ruben Fabela. (Some of you “old timers” might remember some of the names which were listed...)

His passion in life was “goin’ fishin” and listening to “Big Band” music of Tommy Dorsey and Glen Miller on the way to the lake, leaving his grandsons with this fond memory. He shared many a fishing trip with family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. Grandpa/dad leaves his family with treasured memories of over 30 years of annual trips to June Lake, fishing the June Lake loop and Rush Creek up until his health prevented him from making the trip. “His last trip included an ambulance ride and an ‘overnighter’ at Mammoth Hospital with the Dr.’s telling us to ‘take him back to the lake’. And, we did just that. He instilled the love in us for the eastern Sierras. One of his grandsons was even married there. Dad, we will never forget breakfasts at ‘The Stove’, dinners at ‘Carson Peak Inn’, and stops at ‘Schotts Bakery.’”

The family thanks Dr. Sadeh Salmassi, Dr. Sam Shields, Care Coordinator Eric Sandoval, the Physical Therapy Department at Golden Living Center of Bakersfield and Mercy Hospice for their special care. Ernest dealt with a variety of health issues towards the end of his life. He had open heart quadruple by-pass surgery in 2008, and was also diagnosed later with cancer. He was hospitalized from February 24 through May 11, 2011 and showed his “will to live”.

While there is no way that a person’s life can ever be “captured” in just one page, this gives you a glimpse of the life of Ernest C. Alvarado. And—when you think about it—his life mirrors much of what every Letter Carrier’s life is like...

This information springboards on information published in *Bakersfield Californian* on August 24, 2011 [www.bakersfield.com/obits](http://www.bakersfield.com/obits)





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

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

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

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

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

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

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Rick Plummer, Webmaster



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## FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

**General Meeting**  
**Tuesday**  
**September 27, 2011**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Branch 782 Office  
2628 "F" Street  
Bakersfield, California

## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NALC "GOLDEN EMPIRE" BRANCH 782 DELEGATES TO THE 2012 NATIONAL CONVENTION

### NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the election of NALC Branch 782 delegates to the 2012 National Convention will be held at the regular Branch meeting on September 27, 2011 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office located at 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing to the Branch Recording Secretary within three (3) days after the nominations is made. Nominations may be submitted in writing provided that they are received by the Branch Recording Secretary prior to the closing of nominations at the regular Branch meeting in September. Upon nomination, every nominee must certify that he or she has not served as a supervisor for the 24 months prior to being nominated.

By virtue of the position, Branch 782 President and Vice President shall be delegates to the National Convention.

### ELECTION

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 22, 2011 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California.

Any member who, for any reason, will be unable to vote on November 22, 2011, may obtain absentee ballots by submitting a signed written request to the Election Committee, Golden Empire Branch 782, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California 93301-1816, at least two weeks before the election. Absentee ballots must be returned to the election Committee by November 21.

Write-in votes are not permitted.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR BRANCH FUNDS

Of the delegates from the Bakersfield local area selected to the National Convention, the requirements of eligibility for Convention funds will be; attendance at (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the National Convention.

Of the delegates selected from the outlying Associate Offices (excess of thirty miles from Bakersfield), the requirements of eligibility for convention funds shall be: attendance at least two (2) meetings (any combination of regular General Meetings and/or Quarterly Area Meetings) in the twelve months just prior to National Conventions

*Don't forget to check out the web version of this newsletter! More is better... Go to out [WWW.782NALC.COM](http://WWW.782NALC.COM)*