

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



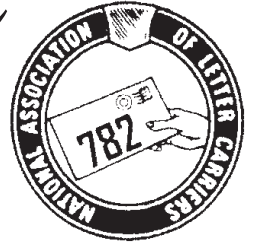
ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 2014

at the
Mike:



**You NEED to
know this about
an increase in
YOUR pay which
was the result of
the negotiations
by the NALC on
your behalf!**

Following the August 19, 2014 release of the July Consumer Price Index (CPI), the fourth Cost-Of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for Letter Carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement is \$686 annually.

This COLA was based on the increase in the CPI between January 2014 and July 2014. It amounts to 33 cents per hour.

Under the terms of the 2011-2016 agreement, payment of this *fourth* COLA will take effect in Pay Period 20 (pay date September 26) — ***THE SAME PAY PERIOD THAT THE DEFERRED SECOND CONTRACT COLA WILL TAKE EFFECT.***

The *second* COLA for Letter Carriers under the 2011-2016 National Agreement was \$541 annually. It was based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index between January 2013 and July 2013.

COMBINED, THE TWO COLAS EQUAL \$1,227.

Continued on next page...

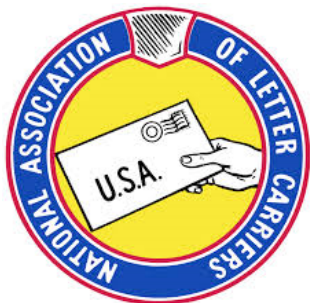
The COLA increases of over \$100 per month for full-time Carriers makes me think about the fourteen career Carriers and the eight CCA's listed in the newsletter who do not belong to the Union. ***I TRULY BELIEVE THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR NOT BELONGING TO THE NALC!!!***

Even those who disagree with the local Union should understand that all of the National Agreements—by themselves—are worth ***EVERY*** penny of the Union dues! It is hard for me to understand when I hear from those non-Union members who tell me that they “cannot afford it”. Do they ***HONESTLY*** think that they would be getting ANY of the the benefits and wages if there was not a Union to negotiate for them?

By looking back in history, it can be shown what Letter Carriers would be getting if there wasn't a Union.

Prior to the establishment of the Postal Service in 1971—***after the Postal Strike birthed by NALC Letter Carrier Vincent R. Sombrotto***—Letter Carriers worked under the following rules and conditions.

- Level 4 pay
 - 21 years to reach top step
 - Probationary period — 1 year
 - No overtime
 - No breaks
 - No wash-up time
 - No Sunday premium pay
 - No Cost of Living increases
 - Paid Holidays — 7
 - Carrier paid part of Life Insurance
 - Health Insurance: Government paid only 50%
 - Regular schedules could be changed from week to week
 - No guarantee of hours for Regulars
 - Hours of work rounded off — if you worked 8 hours 29 minutes you were only paid 8 hours
 - No overtime for PTF's
 - No procedure for filing grievances
 - No National Agreement
 - No Local Agreement
 - No Shop Stewards
 - No protection on bidding rights
- To all those who say they “can't afford the dues” and yet accept all the benefits that the NALC has enabled them to receive, try the following:***
- Work six or seven days a week without overtime
 - Refuse to accept vacations or sick leave
 - Go back to working in unsafe conditions
 - Give back all the benefits you have as a result of collective bargaining



I would like to thank ALL of those Carriers who are Union members and remain Union members year after year! **YOU** are the bedrock of our success!!

THE TIME IS NOW FOR ALL THE NON-UNION CARRIERS TO JOIN AND PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE INSTEAD OF LETTING EVERYONE ELSE PAY FOR THEM...

Hope to see ***YOU*** at the Union meeting at 7:00 on September 23, 2014. And? ***YOU*** could win \$500. Really!!

MIKE TOWERY
NALC Branch 782 President

Somebody is Watching You

Steve Halkias, President
NALC Branch 2008

Management in the Suncoast District is taking a hard look at how you use your sick leave. The District has instructed postmasters to take a look at sick leave usage and reverse the increase in usage. Discipline and grievances over sick leave usage will surely increase during this "Crackdown". One of Managements tactics is to ask for medical documentation when you call in.

Section 513.361 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual deals with medical documentation requirements when you request sick leave.

Section 513.361 States: "**FOR PERIODS OF THREE DAYS OR LESS**, (emphasis added) supervisors may accept the employee's statement explaining the absence. Medical documentation or other acceptable evidence of incapacity for work is required only when the employee is on restricted sick leave "or when the supervisor deems documentation desirable for the protection of the interests of the Postal Service".

Some supervisors believe that the last part of that section 513.361 gives them the right to request medical documentation for absences of three days or less whenever they feel like it.

Arbitration rulings over the years have established clear guidelines as to when the request for documentation is justified and when it is not.

Requests for documentation for three days or less were found to be justified by arbitrators when the circumstances surrounding the absence raised doubts about the genuine nature of the employee's illness. One example of when it has been ruled that the request was justified is when the employee requests sick leave right after a heated discussion with their supervisor. Another example is when a carrier goes home sick after being given an undesirable assignment or when a request for auxiliary assistance has been denied. Also, arbitrators generally rule with management in cases where Carriers call in sick on the day that they had previously been denied leave.

In any of these instances management must point to certain facts that caused them to request medi-

cal documentation. They must have facts to back up their claim that the request was to protect the interest of the Postal Service.

Management cannot establish blanket policies when medical documentation must be provided, such as Saturdays or day after a holiday. If you take sick leave for an absence of three days or less and are told to bring in documentation **YOU MUST FOLLOW THOSE INSTRUCTIONS**. (Emphasis added.) To not follow the instructions could lead to your sick leave being disapproved and/or discipline being issued.

ELM Section 513.364 determines what is acceptable documentation. It states "When employees are required to submit documentation pursuant to these regulations such documentation should be furnished by the employees attending physician or other attending practitioner. The documentation should provide an explanation of the nature of the employee's illness or injury sufficient to indicate to management that the employee was or will be unable to perform his or her normal duties for the period of the absence. Normally medical statements such as "under my care" or "received treatment" are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation to perform duties". The documentation need not give a diagnosis but must state that you were incapacitated to perform you duties.

See you at the Branch meeting.

Article courtesy of the *Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update*
published by NALC Branch 2008 in August 2014

OUT THERE



Johnny on the Spot



Congress calls for halt on plant closures

A large body of Members of the House of Representatives — 160 strong — have called upon House appropriations leaders to include in the stopgap funding bill a one-year moratorium on the closure of the 82 mail processing facilities, including the Bakersfield GMF that are slated for consolidation by USPS, beginning January 2015. The 82 plants are located in 37 states.

The sizable contingent of House members made their appeal for the moratorium in a letter to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) and Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) and others.

Whether the moratorium is included in the House government funding measure remains uncertain. The bill is expected to come to the floor next Wednesday September 17. It generally keeps the government running and avoids a shutdown for the next several months, but also will address other pressing matters.

In underscoring the need for a postal plant closure moratorium, the House letter said:

“The Postal Service has already consolidated 141 mail processing facilities since 2012. As the postal network has been weakened, service has suffered. Since the Postal Service slowed down the processing and delivery of first class mail over two year ago by revising its service standards, it has been more difficult for the American public and small businesses to receive mail in a timely manner. Slowing down mail delivery even further will especially hurt senior citizens on fixed incomes, small businesses, rural areas, and the economy ... This one-year moratorium will give Congress the time it needs to enact the comprehensive postal reforms that are necessary for the Postal Service to function effectively in the future.”

The House letter was spearheaded by Rep. Ed Joyce (R-OH) and Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI). An earlier letter from 51 Senators was sent to Senate appropriations leaders, calling for inclusion of the plant moratorium in the CR.

It is no surprise that our Congressmen McCarthy or Valadeo have not signed on to this letter.

In solidarity

JOHN ORTEGA
NALC Branch 782 Vice-President

Have an Idea for Fred?*

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

** You never know what you might get...*

OUT THERE



“Honest Abe” ... How about “Honest Mable”?

I am a stickler for “Revenue Fraud”. I do the best I can to keep our money coming in. I quickly glance at flats to make sure that they have the right postage.

Right off the bat, do you know that when you get a flat envelope that has \$.69 that postage is NOT enough postage? Our flats start off at \$.98 and then goes to \$1.12, then increases by weight just as do letters. Not only is knowing this kind of information about job security, it is *ALSO* good customer service. Instead of the mail coming back for additional postage or getting postage due on the other end (which in turn, helps the Carrier on the other side do their job efficiently) we can spot it and give it back to the customer.

Devon Patterson wrote an article a while back in regards to cancelling/markings through stamps that were not done by machine so that the customers could not “re-use” them. I, too—ever since reading that article—have been cancelling them out. When I don’t have a pen while delivering at an NBU, I cringe when I can’t do it and it’s going to waste time to go and get a pen to do it. I also have come across customers who have tried to re-use cancelled stamps, USA Non-profit, Pre-sorted First Class stamps, etc.

ALSO, all of you should know that the USPS has been selling Forever stamps. As the rates increase, the Forever stamps increase with it. There are customers who use stamps that have 2006 stamps and I know that they are only \$.39 so I let them know that they are \$.10 short before taking it.

The point is that I try to be very aware of the stamps that are on each and every piece of mail that I deal with. Whether I am delivering a piece or am picking it up,

I strive to ensure that the proper postage is affixed.

One day last month, as I was delivering mail to a business on my route, I came across a piece of mail that had a \$.90 stamp with the picture of Abraham Lincoln on it.



I had *NEVER* seen a stamp of that amount before.

Right away, I thought it was fraudulent. I was going to have the Postal Inspectors examine it and get the distribution ceased.

I asked the addressee (Danny Baron of Baron’s Auto Parts off of South Union) if it was okay for me to take the stamp to check out my suspicions.

He signed off on it, cut the upper corner of the envelope off and gave the stamp to me. On my break, I took a picture of the stamp with my phone and sent it to my husband to check it out on Google.

I then went about my business.

When he got back to me, I was shocked!! Here is what he told me about my “discovery”.

THIS 90-cent Lincoln stamp that was issued in 1869 is worth \$4000 in mint condition and \$1200 in used condition? (<http://values.hobbizine.com/stamps/us-1861-69.html>)

As soon as I heard, I returned it to Mr. Baron and asked, “Are you *SURE* you want to give me this stamp? I mean, Are you *REALLY*, *REALLY* sure???”

He asked, “Why? What’s it worth?”

MABEL S. BULLIS
East Brundage Carrier

Minutes of the August 2014 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 26th day of August, 2014 at the Branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman and OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes. The Minutes of the July 22, 2014 were read and accepted with no additions or corrections. The communications were read.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Teresa Ortega reported that the picnic will be held at Jastro Park on October 12. We will be serving hamburgers and hot dogs. She is working on finalizing the plans. Basil Zuniga reported that "we got the newsletter done." It was supposed to be South Station's turn; he will try the 04's again next month. He thanked the delegates who gave him articles. He will be showing the web version of the newsletter in color later during the meeting. He also informed members that if the plant does in fact close, it may impact the newsletter. He may have to have the folding earlier in the month. Molly Biggar reported that there were no book sales this month.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: John Ortega reported that the By-Laws Committee has met and the proposed change will be in the next newsletter.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that there will be an election for national officers. All members should receive a ballot by October 8th. If you do not receive a ballot, contact a Branch

officer immediately. Only a Branch officer can request a replacement ballot. All ballots must be received at National by October 20. Mike Towery also reported that he settled a grievance that converts 5 PTF's to regular. There are only 6 PTF's left in the city.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Basil Zuniga discussed attending the funeral service for retired carrier Luther Lane. Mike Towery asked for a moment of silence in honor of Luther. Basil Zuniga discussed the next National Convention. The convention will be held in Los Angeles; since the Branch will not have to purchase airfare we should be able to send more delegates. He reminded everyone in order to be a compensated delegate you must attend 10 of 12 meetings prior to the convention. Webmaster Rick Plummer showed the web page and the newsletter to the members. There is a section that has photos. Members can get printed copies of those photos from the website. If anyone has questions about or contributions for the website feel free to contact him. He also informed members that when delegates are at the next convention or at the DC Lobby trip we now have the ability to Skype with them. Basil informed members that there are training videos and convention videos on the website.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman thanked Molly Biggar for giving her report last month. Anita reported that \$17,911.99 was collected for August.



TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported for August 2014:

Beginning Balance	\$79,212.97
Dues & Income	\$11,464.21
Interest Income	\$0.00
Total Balance	\$90,677.18
Total Expenses	\$13,418.09
Ending Balance	\$77,259.09

Mike Towery reported that the COLA will be \$1227.00 per year beginning September 6 and be reflected in the September 26 pay check.

Marcelle Zuniga made a cake to celebrate Basil's birthday. The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Jerry Patterson. The General Meeting Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Mary Breeding, if she had been present.

There were 38 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Non-Member List September 2014*



Downtown Station

S. Kirby
J. Cruz

South Station
100% UNION!!!

Brundage/East Bakersfield
D. Kinglee

Hillcrest
100% UNION!!!

Dole Court
D. Morris
S. Hancock

Stockdale

J. Oh
M. Martinez

Camino Media
C. Rodriguez

Arvin
100% UNION!!!

Avenal
B. Howard

California City
S. T. Ivory

Delano

L.A. Campos
C.V. Quebral

Lamont
100% UNION!!!

Ridgecrest
S. P. Pierce
G.D. Weaver
B. Leroy

Shafter
M. D. Voights
L. M. New

Taft

A. Veach
B. M. Krier
K. J. Hughes
T. Bullard
A. M. Rodriguea

Tehachapi
100% UNION!!!

Trona
100% UNION!!!

Wasco
100% UNION!!!

*CCA names are in italics.

There will be discussion about a proposed Golden Empire Merged Branch 782 By-Laws Change at the General Meeting

NEW LANGUAGE PROPOSED:

“Whereas any Shop Steward that retires and still wants to be Shop Steward, he/she will get an additional \$10.00 pay for time spent on fact finding and any grievance that needs to be filed and \$10.00 for paperwork to review off the clock.”



California's Central Valley Took Center Stage At Our National Convention



By Eric Ellis,
CSALC District 4 Officer

For roughly thirty minutes in Philadelphia, everyone took notice of our neck of the woods.

First—on Monday—a resolution originating out of Branch 231, that passed our California State Convention in April, was adopted with minor modifications.

The resolution directs the National Association of Letter Carriers to lobby our Congress people and Senators to pass legislation to allow City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) to make a deposit so that their CCA and other non-career service counts as service time toward retirement.

THIS IS NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT ISSUE!

Some CCAs and current career employees have seven or more years of “non-career” service. That time does not count for things like annual leave accrual and retirement. When these Postal employees make Regular (unless they had prior career civilian service at another federal agency or military service), they start over when it comes to vacations...meaning that “the clock” starts the day that they make Regular.

A new employee starts by earning 4 hours of annual leave (AL) as well as 4 hours of sick leave per pay period. After three years of service, you jump to 6 hours of AL every two weeks; and, after fifteen years of career service, you top out at 8 hours of AL per pay period.

Do you see why being able to make a deposit to convert such time to career time matters?

Without that right, it means less vacation time each year. It also means hundreds of dollars less in your pension every month when you retire, because you cannot make a deposit for time as a CCA, TE (Transitional Employee), or Casual (unless the time was served prior to January 1, 1989) UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!

This is the way that it is...unless Congress votes to change the law governing such matters. But to do that, **you** need to get out and not only vote for, but precinct walk and phone bank for candidates who support us.

Which brings me to Tuesday of convention week. Letter Carriers from Branches 231 (Fresno), 866 (Visalia), 782 (Bakersfield), and 4430 (Palmdale/Lancaster) escorted Amanda Renteria to the stage and she spoke to the thousands of Letter Carrier delegates in attendance.

Amanda enthusiastically enthralled us with her speech. The theme of her talk was this: “We Need to Preserve the USPS as an Employer where a Letter Carrier, Clerk, Mail Handler Can Earn a Middle-Class Living!” But, there are too many in Congress who believe that we are 35-40 percent overpaid.



While she brought positive attention to our Central Valley, we—Letter Carriers—have an excellent opportunity to end the narrative on a positive note.



As we embark on another election, we will ask all of you to get involved to elect those pro-Letter Carrier candidates like Amanda to Congress. And there *will* be many, many opportunities, from phone banking at our local Central Labor Council building or precinct walking in order to get fellow union members and their family members to vote.

And, in Amanda’s case, such efforts could very well mean the difference between her winning and having her advocate for our issues or having her opponent do things like refuse to meet with your fellow Letter Carriers and NALC representatives.

Congressman David Valadao has not met with us—EVER! HE HAS NOT CO-SPONSORED ANY OF OUR BILLS! In other words, he does the Tea Party’s bidding.

You have a chance to elect someone who will not only favor keeping six-day mail delivery but will also help pass legislation

that will help the USPS survive and thrive long term! *I CAN'T EXPRESS HOW IMPORTANT THAT THIS IS FOR YOU.*

Many Letter Carriers have asked if they are in danger of losing their jobs and seem worried when they read the news regarding our employer's finances. Instead of wringing your hands or cursing at your computer screen, why don't **YOU** do something productive and volunteer by participating in labor-to-labor campaign activities? No one does precinct walking better than Letter

Carriers. No one talks to the public better than Letter Carriers. Why? **YOU** do this every working day! So why don't **YOU** use your unique talents to help elect someone like Amanda Renteria who will vote to preserve your livelihood?

The election for California's 21st District provides Letter Carriers from the Central Valley with an opportunity to steer Congress toward a path of helping all of us stay in the middle class. This is **YOUR** opportunity! Don't waste it!!!!

2014 National Convention:

CCA'S ON THE MINDS OF DELEGATES

I would like to let the CCAs know they are not forgotten!

Everyone agrees that CCAs are some of the hardest working Carriers. CCAs work long hours, now they work on Sundays and even some holidays.

The 2014 National Convention held in Philadelphia focused a lot on CCA's and saving Saturday delivery.

Most CCAs probably have no idea what goes on at a NALC National Convention. The National Convention is held every two years. This is where 6000 to 7000 delegates (Letter Carriers from all over the United States) get together in a gigantic convention hall.



We debate different resolutions in different categories.

You will hear delegates stand up and speak for the resolution and then listen to those against the resolution. This goes back and forth for a little while and then delegates get to vote either for or against the resolution.

Many, many, many resolutions at this year's convention had to do with CCAs.

There wasn't too much disagreement with the CCA resolutions.

All of the delegates seemed to be in agreement that CCAs deserve better options and better pay. Many delegates couldn't

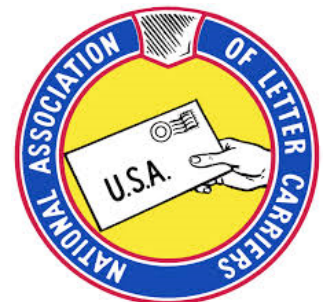
wait to stand up at a microphone and speak out on behalf of all CCAs!

That's what the Brothers and Sisters of the NALC do at these conventions. Delegates all come together to try to make the Postal Service a better place to work.

National President Fred Rolando is very passionate and is working hard to get the CCAs what they deserve.

The next national convention will be held in Los Angeles in 2016. **Anyone who is an NALC member can attend this convention.**

I encourage all CCAs to get more involved and come to the Branch 782 union meetings on the



fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Find out how you can attend the National Convention and see for yourself what the union is doing for you. If you go to the convention you will go home with a different view on how much the union is doing for all Letter Carriers!!

Remember! **CCAs are the future of the Post Office and the NALC does care about you!!!**

SHARI SHARP

2014 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
 CVS/CareMark Specialty Pharmacy 1-800-237-2767
 Durable Medical Equipment 1-888-636-6252
NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7) 1-877-220-6252
 CVS/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 Organ Transplant Approval 1-800-668-9682
 Quit Power (Smoking Cessation) 1-877-521-0244
 CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts) 1-800-558-9443
CIGNA Dental Discount Program 1-877-521-0244
 Disease Management Program 1-800-227-3728
 OPM Retirement Info Center 1-888-767-6738
 Federal Information Center 1-800-333-4636
 Social Security Administration Info 1-800-772-1213
 PostalEase Human Resources USPS 1-877-477-3273
 Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield) (661) 631-8520
 LabCorp Lab Services (661) 631-9258
Shared Services (Retirees Info!!!) 1-877-477-3273

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 85072-2192

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

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

* Failure to pre-certify for in-patient hospitalization will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by our Plan. **YOU MUST** notify the Plan prior to undergoing radiology/imaging with doctor name and dates. Call: 1-877-220-6252.

** NALC Drug Prescription Program is **MANDATORY** generic (unless specified by your doctor, at additional cost to member). Preferred retail pharmacy 1st and 2nd fills, you pay 20% of cost of generic/30% of name brand/45% non-formulary. MAIL ORDER/CVS PRESCRIPTIONS (when NALC is primary): 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand, \$58 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand, \$80 non-formulary; **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary) Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of formulary, 30% non-formulary. **MEDICARE PRIMARY** (mail order); 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 formulary, \$52 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$10 generic, \$55 formulary, \$70 non-formulary; 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.

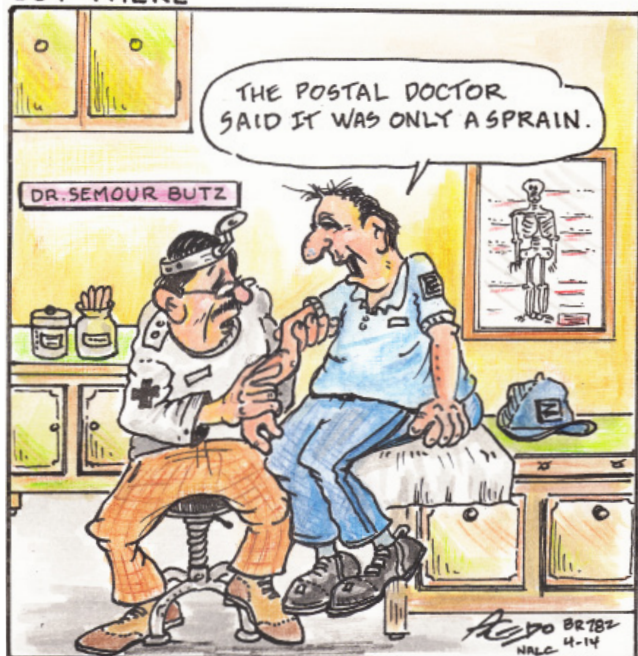
Our PPO doctors and facilities—through CIGNA—save us and the Plan thousands of dollars and it is top notch care at a discount rate. You don't lose anything. You are saving money for the best care!!!
For example: *CIGNA Weight Loss Program (877) 220-6252

Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782 HBP Rep.
(661) 398-6075

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

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

OUT THERE



Health Prescription: Humor from Mark!

Basil.....this is too funny.....and our Branch has a number of MATURE ladies.....
NEVER USE "OLDER".....or someone could wind up in the trunk of a car.....LOL.....Mark

A Mature Lady Gets Pulled Over for Speeding

Older Woman: "Is there a problem, Officer?"

plastic bags in the trunk if you want to see."

Traffic Cop: "Yes ma'am, I'm afraid you were speeding."

The traffic cop looks at the woman and slowly backs away to his car while calling for back up. Within minutes, five police cars circle the car. A senior officer slowly approaches the car, clasping his half drawn gun.

Older Woman: "Oh. I see."

Traffic Cop: "Can I see your license, please?"

Officer 2: "Ma'am, could you step out of your vehicle please!"

Older Woman: "Well, umm, actually, I would give it to you but I don't have one."

Traffic Cop: "You don't have a license?"

The woman steps out of her vehicle.

Older Woman: "No. I lost it 4 years ago for drunk driving."

Older Woman: "Is there a problem sir?"

Traffic Cop: "I see... Can I see your vehicle registration papers, please?"

Officer 2: "The Officer here tells me that you have stolen this car and murdered the owner."

Older Woman: "I can't do that."

Older Woman: "Murdered the owner? Are you serious?!"

Traffic Cop: "Why not?"

Older Woman: "I stole this car."

Officer 2: "Yes. Could you please open the trunk of your car."

Traffic Cop: "Stole it?"

The woman opens the trunk, revealing nothing but an empty trunk.

Older Woman: "Yes, and I killed and hacked up the owner."

Officer 2: "Is this your car, ma'am?"

Traffic Cop: "You what!?"

Older Woman: "Well, Officer, all of his body parts are in

Older Woman: "Yes. Here are the registration papers."

The first traffic cop is quite stunned.

Officer 2: "My colleague claims that you do not have a driving license."

The woman digs into her handbag and pulls out a clutch purse and hands it to the officer. The officer examines the license quizzically.

Officer 2: "Thank you ma'am, but I am puzzled. As I was told by my officer here:

you didn't have a license, you stole this car, and you murdered and hacked up the owner!"

Older Woman: "Bet the lying bastard told you I was speeding, too..."

DON'T MESS WITH MATURE LADIES!!!

If you want to brighten someone's day, pass this on to someone you know.

Distracted Driving Incident

This morning on the Interstate, I looked over to my left and there was a Woman in a brand new Cadillac doing 65 miles per hour with her face up next to her rear view mirror putting on her eyeliner.

I looked away for a couple seconds...to continue shaving... and when I looked back she was halfway over in my lane still working on that makeup.

As a man, I don't scare easily. But she scared me so much, I had to put on my seat belt! And, I dropped my electric shaver which knocked the donut out of my other hand!!

In all the confusion of trying to straighten out the car using my knees against the steering wheel, it knocked my cell phone away from my ear and it fell into the coffee between my legs!

It splashed, burned "Big Jim" and "The Twins", ruined the damn phone, soaked my trousers, and disconnected an important call.

DAMN WOMEN DRIVERS!

Remembering Luther Lane

I got a call from Branch 782 Retiree Bill Curtis. He told me that his neighbor had told him that Luther Lane had passed away. His neighbor is active in the church where Luther was a pastor and she knew that Luther was a retired Carrier. She felt that Bill might have known him.

(As an ironic twist during the conversation, Bill also told me that his neighbor is an avid Obama supporter who has an Obama election poster in her bathroom window which faces *his* back yard. She doesn't have it facing the street. *She has it pointed it in the direction of Bill's house.* If you know Bill Curtis, you might appreciate what some might find humorous in this...)

Bill then looked in the *Bakersfield Californian* to see if there was any kind of obituary notice. There wasn't. But, he called me to give me a heads up.

About a half hour later, I got a call from Danny Blair. He told me that Luther Lane's sister lives on his route and that she told him that Luther had passed away.

Soon, I made a few calls myself. I wanted some folks who had worked with Luther to know what had happened. And, because Luther's "Going Home Celebration" was scheduled for Saturday, August 23 I was there because it was my long weekend.

I got to sit next to Cheryl Cooper and in front of Joe Lewis. (If you recognize these names, you've been around for awhile...) And, although I didn't see him, Cheryl told me that she had seen Paul Alexander outside the church.

Because of Luther's role as a pastor, there was quite an assortment of pastors and even Bishops in attendance. Over the course of some three hours, they shared insights on the person that Luther was and some even added to the celebration heartfelt songs of praise and worship. All of this served as a fitting tribute to a man who had been the epitome of being a man of God and a good and faithful servant.

But, when I met Luther in 1979 I didn't know anything about him, his background or his priorities. Luther was just one of the Letter Carriers at Bakersfield's Downtown Station when I first walked in the door as a brand new PTF.

I had no idea that Luther had already spent some twenty-four years trudging up and down the streets with that heavy leather satchel. Certainly, I didn't realize that—after Luther worked for ten more years he would retire in 1989 and live another twenty-four years in retirement before he would pass away in 2014.

After Luther retired, he led a full and busy life. And, he also kept his ties to the NALC. Luther attended many of the Branch 782 Retiree Dinners through the years.



Luther Lane and Mario Muniz at the November 2010 Retiree Dinner.



Luther Lane and Raul Herrera at the November 2010 Retiree Dinner.

Luther even attended some Union meetings and made sure that the members realized the importance of being active in protecting their hard-won benefits.



I spent a few hours with Luther (l-r) Basil Zuniga, Randy Courson and Luther Lane in 2013 to work out some information for our newsletter to honor his wife, Ophelia, who had recently passed away.

Even though the information wasn't shared with me to memorialize his life, this is how it turned out because he spoke to me about *his* story. The original article originally appeared in our April 2013 newsletter. This abridged version presents an opportunity to remember Luther Lane...

"At a recent Branch 782 general meeting, retiree William 'Luther' Lane reported that Ruby 'Ophelia', his wife of sixty years, had passed away. He asked if it would be appropriate to have something in our newsletter about her. Of course!

After their first meeting, they just went their separate ways. Some time later, he noticed her again when she was riding her bike. They got to talking. He vividly recalls that she was fifteen years old and he was sixteen.

Ophelia and Luther dated while attending Kern County Union High School and their relationship grew. In the years after high school they began to think about marriage.

During the Korean War—when Luther was 20—he received a special letter from the government. He and Ruby decided that joining together in matrimony made sense if he was going to be drafted.

They were married November 22, 1952.

Oh, that “draft thing”? After Luther reported to Fort Ord for basic training, he had an asthma attack and that was the end of his military service. He returned to his new wife and they began an adventure together that would last 60 years and three months!

Following a short stint in Los Angeles where Luther says, ‘We lived there ‘bout a minute...’, Ophelia and Luther moved back to Bakersfield. He soon had a job with a pipe company working in the Edwards AFB area. However, the job was dirty and very dusty. Not the best ingredients for someone with asthma. Luther recalls that the supervisor called him in to his office and told him that if he stayed, his health would suffer.

Luther knew he needed a better job.

While living in Los Angeles, Luther had worked for the Post Office as a Christmas temp. A supervisor suggested that he take the test for the Post Office if he ever had a chance.

Luther got to thinking about that Post Office supervisor’s advice after their return to Bakersfield. In September 1955, the Post Office got a new employee!

Another important event happened in 1955: Gwendolyn was born in 1955! (She was followed by Erwin in 1956 and their baby boy, Dwight, in 1958.)

Luther shared some memories of his time as a Sub!

Usually, he would work twelve to fourteen hours a day at ‘The Annex’ at 16th and Eye. There were many, many times that he worked **a whole lot of sixteen hours days in succession!** He was exhausted much of the time.

For a little perspective, try to put yourself in Luther’s shoes: You have just finished your assigned duties for the day as a Letter Carrier. Think about how tired you are. Think about how you feel as you walk over to the clock to punch out and head home to relax. Your day is over, right?

If you’ve read these words in this last paragraph, re-read them.

Well, from 1955-1957 (when Luther was a Sub) things were different! **THIS** was his world: There was no overtime pay, and he got to know the night supervisor pretty well...

When Luther checked in his accountables at the cage at the end of his Letter Carrier day, that night supervisor would be right there and direct him and other Subs over to the hand case where they would sort mail by states. They would then carry sacks of mail and stage them for transport to the train station where they would be loaded on the train for sorting and delivery as the trains travelled across the country. Or, they would work parcels. Or, they would do anything else that the supervisor required them to do until they finally clocked out after working and working!!!

One night, he remembered that he was probably ‘asleep on his feet’ when he was carrying a sack of mail to be taken to the train.

He walked off ‘the porch’ and suddenly woke up while he was freefalling through the air—and was able to somehow land on his feet! Luther smiled... ‘In those days, I was a little quicker than I am now!’

There is one sweet memory that Luther relishes. He came in from the street and that night supervisor wasn’t in his usual location. Luther just checked in as quick as he could, grabbed his gear, clocked out, and headed home as fast as he could! Because ‘home’ was where his sweetheart, Ophelia, was.

And, there was a silver lining to all of those long hours he was putting in. ***HE WOULD USUALLY BRING HOME OVER \$200 A PAYCHECK WHEN HE WAS A SUB!***

That really changed when he made Regular. ***HIS CHECKS DROPPED TO \$139.*** And, by then, Luther and Ruby had bought their first house. Their payments were \$65 a month! Working side jobs, Luther was able to keep things together.

Ophelia was the reason he was able to persevere! She, his children, and his abiding faith in his God, gave him the strength to cope with all of the trials and tribulations

Luther and Ophelia early on became involved in trying to make sure that they could protect the Rights and Benefits that they had. Luther was an active NALC member who was a convention delegate. When Luther attended NALC meetings at the Veterans’ Hall on Mt. Vernon, Ruby would participate in the NALC Auxiliary meetings that were being conducted next door.

Luther admits that his ‘active’ participation as an NALC activist tapered off when he found it difficult to reconcile his personal involvement with how much alcohol seemed to be consumed by convention delegates. His Christian beliefs and convictions were always the bedrock of his life.

But, Luther insists that he never stopped believing in those goals which the NALC strived to achieve for all Letter Carriers!

Following his retirement in 1989, Ophelia and Luther enjoyed their travels to Europe, the Bahamas and other beautiful locations.

Luther has an aching sadness as he deals with day-to-day business. He misses his Ophelia and her cooking and her wisdom.

(In closing, he shared a story about how his desire to get some ‘free’ manure led to a stay in the hospital, and a long period of therapy. Ophelia *had* warned him that he had better not do too much...) He misses her, but he knows that he will be joined with her again. And **THAT** is the best thing of all!!!”

I’m confident that Luther and Ophelia are now happy together!

BASIL ZUNIGA

Branch 782's "Miss Picnic" "Mamma Theresa"

**Theresa's not just a couch potato!
She's Branch 782's picnic coordinator!**

**I know Theresa has PMS,
24/7 at work and home!!
For Theresa, PMS stands for,
Potty Mouth Syndrome!!!!**

**They say, Theresa uses naughty words,
I find that quite absurd,
Except, she can't say "Good Morning,"
Without using a four letter word,!**

**She always acts the bully!
It's just smoke and lots of fun,
She is a loving mother,
To her daughter and her son!**

**Theresa can be difficult,!!!!!!
We should really spank her, but,!
I have a better solution,!!
Can we sew her darn mouth shut!!!!**

**Theresa's a tall gal,
A "big heart", oh yeah you bet!!
Some find it simply amazing,
She hasn't strangled Mark yet!!!!!!**

**She puts on a super picnic for US!!!!,
She's so sweet,
She's Theresa Ortega SAURUS!!!!**

by MARK RA
NALC HBP Representative (poet)
Golden Empire Merged Bra



Food will be served from
11:00 to 1:00

FREE for family members
who are living in the member's
household and \$10 for guests

Hamburgers, hotdogs, beans, chips, salad, sodas, iced tea

1 choice of dessert snow cones, funnel cake or kettle corn
Additional desserts at \$2.00.

Face painting

Balloon making

Obstacle course

Laser tag Bounce

Tug of War

Egg toss Games

OUT THERE



HOW'D THEY GET MARK TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE DUNK TANK?
I DON'T THINK HE CAN SWIM!

October 12, 2014
Jastro Park
10:00 a.m. until ?



Well, Bill Marchand, you had a great ride!

For almost fifty-seven years, he and Betty would share life's joys and struggles and forge a union that would be rooted in a

firmly held belief that theirs was a blessed union.

And, you know what? **THEY WERE SO RIGHT!**

For almost fifty-seven years, Bill and Betty would bear witness to their lasting love.

But, when they were starting out—like every other couple embarking on this adventure—they didn't exactly know how they were going to be able to make ends meet.

With Bill's military service, he was eligible for benefits from the G.I. Bill which paid for him to go to barber college. However, after working as a barber for a while, he realized that he *hated* working inside.

He heard that the Post Office might be hiring Letter Carriers and that he would be required to take a test to see if he qualified. Letter Carriers worked outside... Seemed like *this* was a good idea!

Bill's first day as a Carrier was on September 25, 1959. His last day was March 31, 2002.

Bill Marchand was my T-6 for over twenty years during the time I had my first bid assignment (Route 427).

Seems like a long time.

But, by the time I bid off, Bill had already been carrying mail for well over forty years. Geez!!!

THAT IS A LONG TIME!!

And, then? Bill went on to total forty-three years of service as a USPS Letter Carrier!

Of course, when he started he was just looking to get out from behind that barber's chair and get outside.

And, (as Paul Harvey would have said) now for the rest of the story...

Following graduation from Garces High School, Bill joined the U.S. Navy in 1954 and served honorably until his discharge in 1957.

Another momentous event happened in 1957. On September 21, Bill married this girl who had graduated from Bakersfield's North High. And he was happy!



Bill Marchand in the early 1980's

over the course of the forty-three years!

In an article written to honor Bill at the time of his retirement in 2002, Carrier Melissa Kelly shared these comments:

"I remember my first day at the South Station on route 428.

Marchand was the T-6. I was understandably very nervous about my first day.

If you have ever carried or tried to case 428, you know how chopped up the streets are. (And, since this was before DPS, I had to case *everything*.) It was difficult to learn 428!

Well, I had four feet of letters on the ledge when I started. *And*—when Bill came back to check up on me—I *STILL* had almost four feet left...

I asked him where 601 4th street was on the case. He replied, 'You're cracking up. It's the first stop on the route!'

Those forty-three years from the first day until the last day saw the birth of two sons (Kennedy and James) and their baby, Pam and a whole lot of livin' and lovin'. Betty—with more than just a little sadness in her eyes—shared, "Other than the last three months of his life, Bill and I had never spent very much time apart."

Bill also made countless friends during his career. Many were the customers that he saw each and every day in all of the neighborhoods that he delivered. Many Postal employees also came to know and love him



(l-r) Some of South Station's Carriers in the mid-1980's: Joe Gandara, Danny Blair, Bill Marchand, John Rugnao, Alvie Ramos, Don Blanco, Bill Thomaas, Ramon Herrera, Rob Brown, Frank Diaz, Andy Gonczar, Dave Carlyon and Darryl Holderman.

After that, I thought to myself, ‘What a crabby man!’ I didn’t know if he was kidding or not.

Well, Day 2 came. Seeing that I was still having problems casing, he let me case the flats and he cased up the letter mail. He did that even though he still had a route of his own to case and carry.

After that, he would come out to the route and check on how I was doing. He always would take a swing off me so that I would get back in eight.

After awhile, I got to know Bill and his personality better.

I will dearly miss the *BEST* T-6 who ever lived because he has become one of my best friends in the P.O.

Of course, this has nothing to do with the chocolate sprinkle donut he left on my ledge every Saturday morning...”

And, as Darryl Holderman also wrote in 2002:

“Yes, Mr. Marchand, I thought you were just mean and grumpy way back then. But, now, I know the truth—*Your Bark is Worse than Your Bite.*”

When I first started, I was passing out mail. Being a PTF, everyone warned me about you. I *HAD* to place the tub of flats *in just the right place* or you would start growling.

AND, if I dropped that tray of letters on the floor instead of placing it on the ledge *JUST RIGHT*, I would **REALLY** see that grumpy old man!

Well, now, I know different.

Too many times, I have seen you look mean toward someone only to turn around and have that smirk on your face... knowing that you got under their skin.

I am really going to miss that Bill Marchand sense of humor...”

I have many of my own

memories, I don’t know how many times I heard Frank Diaz refer to my T-6 as “Billy Goat Marchand”!

Bill was one of the breed of the “Tough Old Carriers”.

Once, I saw him wince as he turned toward me. I asked him if he was okay. He took off his shoe and sock and showed me this ugly, gigantic blister. He just put the sock and shoe back on and “Carried on”.

I don’t what it was about Route 427, but Bill had a few situations that he dealt with when he was delivering my route. And, yes, at least one of those situations had something to do with dogs...

He had a German Shepherd attack him at 2504 Dore Dr. Here is a picture of the aftermath:



Years later—again on my route—Bill’s nose started to bleed. It wouldn’t stop. Customers came to his assistance. The bleeding just wouldn’t stop. He was eventually taken to the hospital in an ambulance and received proper care.

If you knew Bill, you know he didn’t like to see any blood. Seeing his own blood? *Nope!!*

Ironically, a number of South Station Carriers and members of the family were sitting at Pizzaville waiting for Bill to show up because there was a surprise birthday party planned in his honor. Didn’t happen.

SPEAKING OF DOGS...

Towards the tail end of his career, Bill started walking up to deliver mail to a house and he was charged by *two* pit bulls.

He made it back to his vehicle and—as he was trying to slam the door shut—he had to kick at one of the dogs. That dog ripped his shoe off and ran back in the yard and pretended that it was one of Bill’s feet.

Jim Shebley got the shoe from Betty and used it to make a memento which was presented



to Bill at his retirement party in 2002.

And that reminds me of Sheila Wiley telling Bill all during the party, “*You ‘da Man!!!!*”

A T-6 Carrier has to rely a lot on their memory. They have five different assignments that they have to remember COAs or special orders or where dogs might be apt to hide. And Bill did!

It saddens me that, in his final years, Bill (and his

family) had to deal with the debilitating effects of Alzheimer’s.

Bill, my old friend, Rest in God’s Peace!

BASIL
ZUNIGA

And, your last ride was a special tribute...

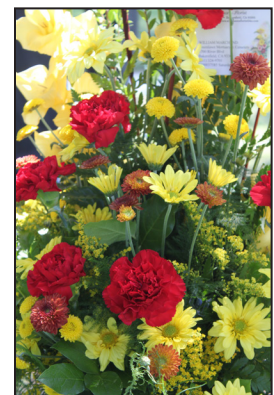
Bill bought a brand new Chevy truck in 1968. With that “big block”, it was his baby and he took it everywhere. Betty knew that Bill would have smiled to know that his casket would be taken to the burial site by that truck...



John Rosso & Darryl Holderman help Bill complete his final ride.



South Carriers, following that old Chevy truck, pay their respects.



from the
editor-guy:

There will be more in next month’s newsletter...

No Left Turns...

This is a wonderful piece by Michael Gartner, editor of newspapers large and small and president of NBC News. In 1997, he won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing. It is well worth reading, and a few good chuckles are guaranteed. Here goes...

My father never drove a car. Well, that's not quite right. I should say I never saw him drive a car.

He quit driving in 1927, when he was 25 years old, and the last car he drove was a 1926 Whippet. "In those days," he told me when he was in his 90s, "to drive a car you had to do things with your hands, and do things with your feet, and look every which way, and I decided you could walk through life and enjoy it or drive through life and miss it."

At which point my mother—a sometimes salty Irish woman—chimed in: "He hit a horse." "Well," my father said, "there was that, too."

So my brother and I grew up in a household without a car. The neighbors all had cars -- the Kollingses next door had a green 1941 Dodge, the VanLaningshams across the street a gray 1936 Plymouth, the Hopsons two doors down a black 1941 Ford -- but we had none.

My father, a newspaperman in Des Moines, would take the streetcar to work and, often as not, walk the three miles home. If he took the streetcar home, my mother and brother and I would walk the three blocks to the streetcar stop, meet him and walk home together.

My brother, David, was born in 1935, and I was born in 1938, and sometimes, at dinner, we'd ask how come all the neighbors had cars but we had none. "No one in the family drives," my mother would explain, and that was that. But, sometimes, my father would say, "But as soon as one of you boys turns 16, we'll get one." It was as if he wasn't sure which one of us would turn 16 first.

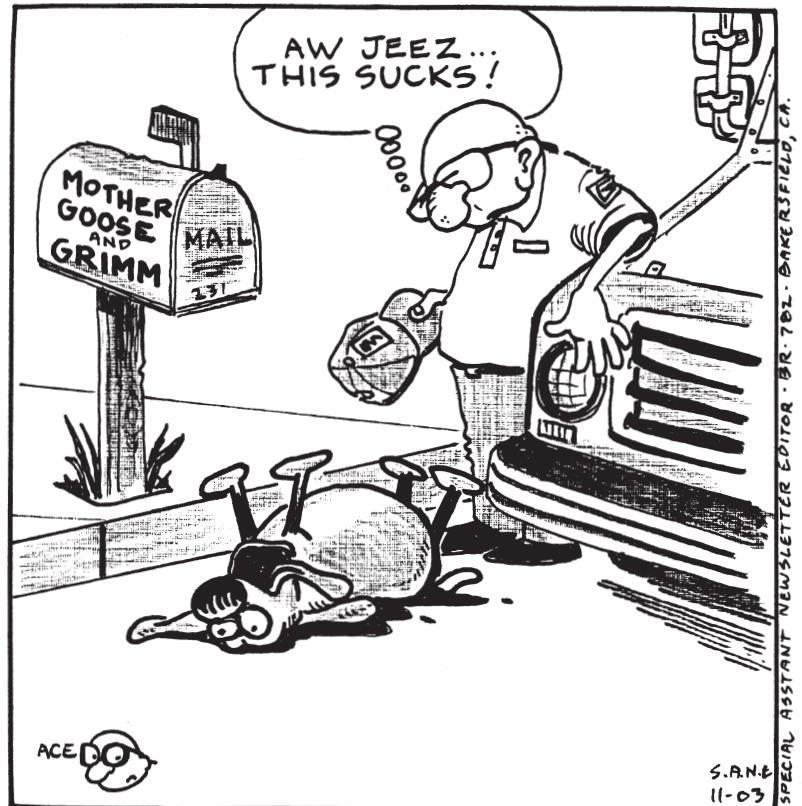
But, sure enough, my brother turned 16 before I did, so in 1951 my parents bought a used 1950 Chevrolet from a friend who ran the parts department at a Chevy dealership downtown. It was a four-door, white model, stick shift, fender skirts, loaded with everything, and, since my parents didn't drive, it more or less became my brother's car.

Having a car but not being able to drive didn't bother my father, but it didn't make sense to my mother. So in 1952, when she was 43 years old, she asked a friend to teach her to drive.

She learned in a nearby cemetery, the place where I learned to drive the following year and where, a generation later, I took my two sons to practice driving. The cemetery probably was my father's idea. "Who can your mother hurt in the cemetery?" I remember him saying more than once.

For the next 45 years or so, until she was 90, my mother was the driver in the family. Neither she nor my father had any sense of direction, but he loaded up on maps — though they seldom left the city limits — and appointed himself navigator. It seemed to work.

OUT THERE



Still, they both continued to walk a lot. My mother was a devout Catholic, and my father an equally devout agnostic, an arrangement that didn't seem to bother either of them through their 75 years of marriage. (Yes, 75 years, and they were deeply in love the entire time.) He retired when he was 70, and nearly every morning for the next 20 years or so, he would walk with her the mile to St. Augustin's Church.

She would walk down and sit in the front pew, and he would wait in the back until he saw which of the parish's two priests was on duty that morning. If it was the pastor, my father then would go out and take a 2-mile walk, meeting my mother at the end of the service and walking her home.

If it was the assistant pastor, he'd take just a 1-mile walk and then head back to the church. He called the priests "Father Fast" and "Father Slow."

After he retired, my father almost always accompanied my mother whenever she drove anywhere, even if he had no reason

to go along. If she were going to the beauty parlor, he'd sit in the car and read, or go take a stroll or, if it was summer, have her keep the engine running so he could listen to the Cubs game on the radio. In the evening, then, when I'd stop by, he'd explain: "The Cubs lost again. The millionaire on second base made a bad throw to the millionaire on first base, so the multimillionaire on third base scored."

If she were going to the grocery store, he would go along to carry the bags out -- and to make sure she loaded up on ice cream. As I said, he was always the navigator, and once, when he was 95 and she was 88 and still driving, he said to me, "Do you want to know the secret of a long life?"

"I guess so," I said, knowing it probably would be something bizarre.

"No left turns," he said. "What?" I asked.

"No left turns," he repeated. "Several years ago, your mother and I read an article that said most accidents that old people are in happen when they turn left in front of oncoming traffic. As you get older, your eyesight worsens, and you can lose your depth perception, it said. So your mother and I decided never again to make a left turn."

"What?" I said again.

"No left turns," he said. "Think about it. Three rights are the same as a left, and that's a lot safer. So we always make three rights." "You're kidding!" I said, and I turned to my mother for support.

"No," she said, "your father is right. We make three rights. It works." But then she added: "Except when your father loses count."

I was driving at the time, and I almost drove off the road as I started laughing. "Loses count?" I asked. "Yes," my father admitted, "that sometimes happens. But it's not a problem. You just make seven rights, and you're okay again."

I couldn't resist. "Do you ever go for 11?" I asked. "No," he said. "If we miss it at seven, we just come home and call it a bad day. Besides, nothing in life is so important it can't be put off another day or another week."

My mother was never in an accident, but one evening she handed me her car keys and said she had decided to quit driving. That was in 1999, when she was 90. She lived four more years, until 2003. My father died the next year, at 102.

They both died in the bungalow they had moved into in 1937 and bought a few years later for \$3,000. (Sixty years later, my brother and I paid \$8,000 to have a shower put in the tiny bathroom — the house had never had one. My father would have died then and there if he knew the shower cost nearly three times what he paid for the house.)

He continued to walk daily. He had me get him a treadmill when he was 101 because he was afraid he'd fall on the icy sidewalks but wanted to keep exercising and he was of sound mind and sound body until the moment he died

One September afternoon in 2004, he and my son went with me when I had to give a talk in a neighboring town, and it was clear to all three of us that he was wearing out, though we had the usual wide-ranging conversation about politics and newspapers and things in the news.

A few weeks earlier, he had told my son, "You know, Mike, the first hundred years are a lot easier than the second hundred." At one point in our drive that Saturday, he said, "You know, I'm probably not going to live much longer."

"You're probably right," I said. "Why would you say that?" he countered, somewhat irritated. "Because you're 102 years old," I said. "Yes," he said, "you're right." He stayed in bed all the next day.

That night, I suggested to my son and daughter that we sit up with him through the night. He appreciated it, he said. Though, at one point, apparently seeing us look gloomy, he said: "I would like to make an announcement. No one in this room is dead yet"

An hour or so later, he spoke his last words: "I want you to know," he said, clearly and lucidly, "that I am in no pain. I am very comfortable. And I have had as happy a life as anyone on this earth could ever have."

A short time later, he died.

I miss him a lot, and I think about him a lot. I've wondered now and then how it was that my family and I were so lucky that he lived so long.

I can't figure out if it was because he walked through life, Or because he quit taking left turns."

Life is too short to wake up with regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Forget about the ones who don't. Believe that everything happens for a reason. If you get a chance, take it & if it changes your life, let it.

Nobody said life would be easy, they just promised it would most likely be worth it.

**ENJOY LIFE NOW —
IT HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE!**

This reprinted article was originally submitted by Branch 782 Retiree Bill Curtis.

from the
editor-guy:

Obituaries make me think about things like this. And, that's not a bad thing at all...



Bryson Zuspan started with the Postal Service in September of 2013. His aunt is an RCA carrier in Dos Palos. When he first applied he was looking for a job that paid well and he did not know that Carriers actually worked 8 hour days.

Like many, he was among a long list of people who thought our job was easy. He has quickly found out that... He is only 19 years old and is looking to stay in the Postal Service for a long career. Before he became a Carrier, he worked with his step-dad delivering equipment from one hospital to another.

He lives in East Bakersfield but works in Shafter. Fortunately for him, he does not work on Sundays. He usually gets forty hours a week, but on rare occasions—when the office is fully staffed—he goes down to 20 - 26 hours a week.

This is his first job being outside. He has had some physical changes since he started. Before, he went to gym, lifted weights and was bigger in size. Now he has toned down and is skinny with strong legs. He has mostly walking routes in Shafter and definitely he gets his cardio workout daily.

So far, the *BEST* part of his job are the benefits and his customers. They appreciate what we do and offer cold beverages. The *WORST* part is the heat. Bryson has realized throughout this first year what to do and what *NOT* to do. He says, “Before even starting the job, get acclimated to the weather.”

He’s lived in Bakersfield long enough to know how hot it gets but he has NEVER done work and stayed in the heat all day long. He advises new folks to drink plenty of water. “Have a set amount with you for the day. Even if you are behind on your route, always make sure you are drinking plenty of water because even if you think you are okay...you are not.”

He says he has had heat exhaustion before because his mind felt cloudy and forgetful. He wears a sun helmet to

help. “When it is hot, do not eat bad, greasy fast food or drink caffeine, it actually dehydrates you.”

Additionally, Bryson notes: “It also helps to have really good shoes!”

Oh... and when the mail volume is high (having eleven trays of DPS wasn’t one of his best days) or during Christmas he found himself extremely overloaded.

Bryson would like to get more information about the Union and wished that the Post Office allotted more time for President Towery to talk about it during orientation.

He says, “Staying organized will help you in the end. Remember ask many questions to learn more about how to do the job better.”

He would really like the Postal Service to help get Carriers off the street earlier. Especially during the summer!

Asking him on his take about the CCA who threw three trays of DPS in dumpster, he replied, “It is unacceptable to throw away mail!! There are important documents, checks, ect.” His advice for others when they are stressed out with management pressuring them to get delivery done faster— “NALC will stick behind you”.



MABEL S. BULLIS
East Brundage Carrier

A Focus on Our Future: CCA Bryson Zuspan.....

Win \$500?

Each and every month Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage *YOU* to come to our Meeting*. There was no winner in July. So? Do *YOU* have a chance to win the \$500? Yup. Be there...

*The fine print: To win the money you have to be present at the meeting when the names are drawn.

DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

In honor of NALC's president from 1941 to 1962, the **William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund** will again award five \$4,000 scholarships to children of members in good standing. The **John T. Donelon Scholarship Fund** will award one scholarship in honor of Donelon, longtime NALC assistant to the president. Applicants must be high school seniors and must meet all of the following eligibility criteria to be considered.

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2014.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be the son, daughter or legally adopted child of a letter carrier NALC member in good standing—active, retired or deceased. Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.
- Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of NALC for at least one year prior to making application.
- Applicant must be a high school senior when making application and must submit the form provided at right, signed by the NALC member and an officer of the member's NALC branch. This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters by December 31, 2014.

Requirements

- All applicants must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) in either their junior or senior year. A copy of the official scores from the administering organization must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2015. (Computer-generated printouts of test scores will not be accepted.)
- All biographical questionnaires and secondary school reports must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2015.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate

degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.
- Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.
- A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.
- If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.
- If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.
- If the NALC member is suspended by his/her local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be cancelled.

Terms of awards

- The official scholarship judges will award one William C. Doherty Scholarship in each of the five USPS Regions and one John T. Donelon Scholarship. Winners are judged on the basis of secondary school records, personal qualifications and test scores. As in the past, the scholarship judges will consist of experienced persons in the educational field. Decisions of the judges will be final.
- Doherty Scholarship awards will be \$4,000 per year and the

Donelon Scholarship award will be \$1,000 per year. Each scholarship is renewable for three consecutive years thereafter providing the winner maintains satisfactory grades. Award money will be deposited annually with the college. It will be credited to the winner's account to be drawn upon under the rules and regulations which the college has established for handling scholarship funds. Award money is to be used for required college fees, including room and board and transportation fees.

- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ (Please print clearly)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I am a senior in the 2014-15 school year.

I am the daughter son of active
 *stepdaughter *stepson retired
 *granddaughter *grandson deceased

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. _____ City _____ State _____

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____

Signature of NALC parent member (or spouse if deceased)	Signature of branch officer •
Printed name of branch officer	
NALC parent's Social Security No.	Title Date

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2014, to the NALC Scholarship Committee, in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

* Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.

This could be crucial Info...

When An Active Letter Carrier Passes Away...

Notify employee's immediate supervisor, post-master and personnel office (if any). Give the supervisor locker keys and badge as well as information on time and place of memorial services. Fill out forms (obtain from USPS personnel section or postmaster): application for death benefits under the retirement system; claim for unpaid compensation; claim for FEGLI death benefits.

If the carrier had a TSP account, notify the Thrift Savings Plan Service Center, National Financial Center, P.O. Box 61500, New Orleans, LA 70161-1500 or call 877-968-3778

Notify the carrier's NALC Branch.

If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office.

Notify banks and other financial institutions.

Call the local office of the Social Security Administration or toll-free 800-772-1213.

Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the carrier had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, write to 100 Indiana Avenue NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318.

If the carrier belonged to the NALC Health Benefit Plan, write 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149 or call 703-729-4677. NOTE: Health benefit coverage

for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if the carrier had family coverage at the time of death and if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.

Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs (they can suggest how many) Also have on hand marriage license and /or divorce decree, if applicable.

When A Retired Letter Carrier Passes Away...

Notify U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Retirement Programs, Retirement Operations Center, Boyers, Pa. 16017 or call toll-free 888-767-6738. and provide: full name of deceased; date of birth; date of death; Social Security number; CSA claim number; address, relationship and signature of person entitled to survivor benefits.

For quicker action, provide the above information to NALC's Director of Retired Members, 100 Indiana Avenue NW, Washington DC 20001-2144, or call 202-393-4695 or call toll-free 800-424-5186 Monday, Wednesday or Thursday, 10a.m.-noon and 2p.m.-4p.m. (Eastern time). NALC will alert OPM so that survivor benefits will commence as quickly as possible, and will send you the application for death benefits, survivor annuity, and claim for benefits, FEGLI. Remember, that survivor annuities are not paid automatically. You must apply to OPM to receive benefits.

Return any uncashed annuity checks to the address on the accompanying Treasury Department envelope. If payments are made directly to a financial institution, notify it of the retiree's date of death and request that any future payments be returned to the Treasury Department.

If the retired carrier had a TSP account, notify the Thrift Savings Plan Service Center, National Financial Center, P.O. Box 61500, New Orleans, LA 70161-1500, or call 877-968-3778.

Notify the retired carrier's NALC branch.

If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office.

Notify banks and other financial institutions.

Call the local Social Security Administration or toll-free 800-772-1213.

**By Craig Bishop
Senior Vice President**



WEINGARTEN

RIGHTS: One of the most important rights you have is the right to have union representation during an investigatory interview. An investigatory interview is any

questioning by management, the Office of Inspector General (OIG), or the Postal Inspection Service that you reasonably believe may lead to discipline. An investigatory interview is usually defined as questioning by management to search for facts that will be used to determine an employee's guilt, or to decide whether to impose discipline. Page 17-6 of the JCAM states:

Weingarten Rights Federal labor law, in what is known as the Weingarten rule, gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline. (NLRB v. J. Weingarten, U.S. Supreme Court, 1975)

The Weingarten rule only applies during an investigatory interview. It does not apply for other types of meetings, such as during an official discussion, a fitness-for-duty exam, or when management is issuing disciplinary action, i.e. handing a carrier a letter of warning.

Unlike Miranda rights, management is not required to inform an employee of their Weingarten rights. An employee must state to the employer that he/she wants a Union representative present; the employer has no obligation to ask the employee if she/he wants a representative. The shop steward cannot exercise your Weingarten rights on your behalf, you must exercise them yourself. This request can be made prior to the start of the interview or at any time during the interview, although it is highly recommended the re-

quest be made prior to the interview beginning.

Your Weingarten rights apply no matter where the investigatory interview is taking place. If a Supervisor, Postal Inspector or OIG agent calls you into the office and asks you questions you reasonably believe could lead to discipline, your Weingarten rights apply. If a Supervisor, Postal Inspector or OIG agent approach you on the street and ask you questions you reasonably believe could lead to discipline, your Weingarten rights apply. If a Supervisor, Postal Inspector, or OIG agent come to your home or call you on the telephone and ask you questions you reasonably believe could lead to discipline, your Weingarten rights apply.

Before you answer any questions during any type of investigatory interview, be sure you request and receive union representation. If you request union representation it must be provided. Page 17-7 of the JCAM states:

Although ELM Section 666.6 requires all postal employees to cooperate with postal investigations, the carrier still has the right under Weingarten to have a steward present before answering questions in this situation. The carrier may respond that he or she will answer questions once a steward is provided.

Once you have been provided union representation, you have the right to a pre-interview consultation with the steward. The union representative is there for the employee's assistance, not just as a silent witness. Management is violating the employee's Weingarten rights if they refuse to allow the union representative to speak or attempt to restrict the representative's role to that of a passive observer. Some of the reasons this is important:

1) The steward can help a fearful or inarticulate employee explain what happened

- 2) The steward can ask for clarification of questions being answered
- 3) The steward can raise extenuating factors
- 4) The steward can stop an employee from losing his or her temper
- 5) The steward can serve as a witness to prevent supervisors from giving a false account of the conversation

Postal Inspectors and OIG agent are trained investigators and will try to make you feel they are your friend, you are in no trouble, and that you really have no need for representation. They will in some instances try to have you write a statement or sign a paper waiving your Miranda, Garrity, or Kalkines rights. Always get union representation before writing a statement or signing away any of your rights.

One of the most vital functions of your Union representatives is to represent an employee in an investigatory interview. In many cases Management, the Postal Inspector, or the OIG agent will attempt to get the employee to confess or make a statement that management will then use to issue discipline to the employee. Please allow us to represent you from the beginning of the investigation by exercising your Weingarten rights.

Occasionally, a supervisor or Postmaster will tell an employee that the employee has a certain amount of time to find a union representative, or the interview will be conducted without the benefit of union representation. **THIS IS NOT TRUE!** Once an employee invokes his/her Weingarten rights, **IT IS MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY** to provide a steward. If the unit does not have a steward, **MANAGEMENT IS RESPONSIBLE TO CONTACT PRESIDENT BRIAN BUMP** and ask him to schedule a representative to be present for the interview.

Fraternally,
Craig

Article courtesy of the *Swing Room Gazette* published in September 2014 by NALC Branch 133 in Sacramento, CA.

...This could, too!

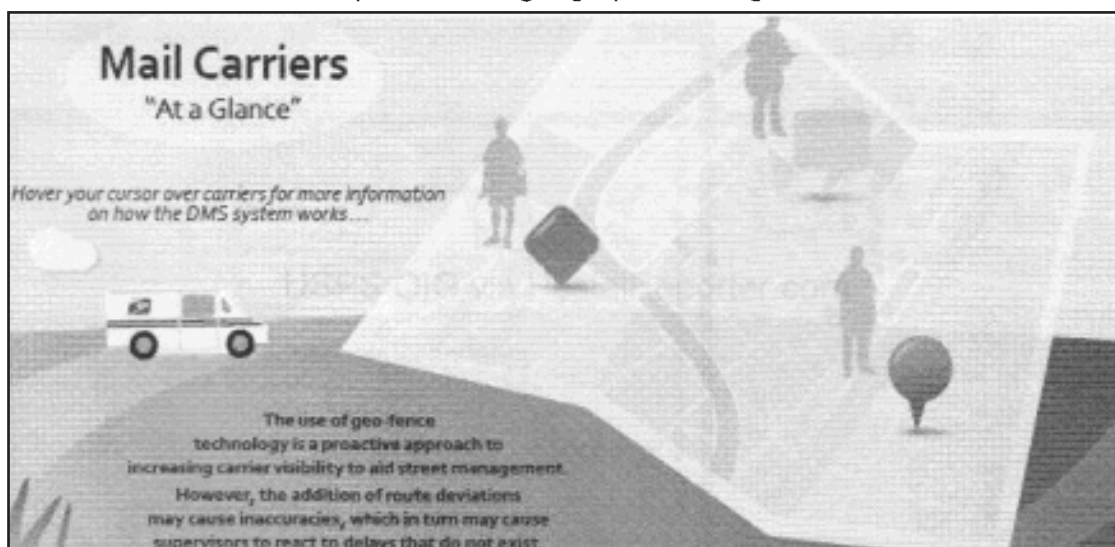
USPS to Monitor Carriers street delivery thru Geo-Fence Technology (GPS) starting September 30

Here are excerpts from the USPS OIG report: The U.S. Postal Service is developing and pilot testing the Delivery Management System to improve carrier efficiency during street delivery. This system combines Global Positioning System data and other data from various systems to allow supervisors to see "at a glance" the location of each carrier and whether they are ahead of or behind their scheduled delivery time. These scheduled delivery times are based on each routes' base evaluation and the associated Managed Service Point scan times on each route.

This system will also include geo-fence technology to assist supervisors in monitoring delivery operations. Geo-fence technology is a system based on the concept of virtual geographic

the delivery environment is a proactive way to increase carrier visibility to aid street management. However, we identified an inaccuracy in the Delivery Management System. Specifically, projected scan times are not adjusted for authorized route deviations when carriers are assigned deliveries on portions of additional routes. This occurs because the Postal Service has not updated the Delivery Management System for these authorized route deviations. Management planned to address this scan variance issue in April 2014; but, as of June 2014, had not finalized the adjustments.

Inaccurate scan variance data may cause supervisors to react to carrier delays that are actually justified based on their daily delivery assignment.



We recommended the vice president, Product Information, modify the Delivery Management System software to capture adjustments for time and location projections when carriers are assigned deliveries on

zones. Should a carrier deviate from his or her designated geographic zone during street delivery, an alert is sent to the supervisor in an email or text message. The geo-fence component of the pilot program was expected to begin in July 2014. There are seven planned test sites consisting of one delivery unit in each of the seven Postal Service areas of operation.

Our objective was to assess the Postal Service's efforts to implement geo-fence technology in delivery operation.

What the OIG Found. The Postal Service's planned use of geo-fence technology in

more than one route prior to nationwide implementation of DMS

The DMS will display an icon to indicate the location and timeliness of each carrier. As illustrated in Figure 1, a red circle indicates the carrier is more than 15 minutes behind schedule, a yellow square indicates the carrier is fewer than 15 minutes behind schedule, and a green diamond indicates the carrier is either on time or ahead of their scheduled delivery time. The accuracy of this information is paramount to enabling delivery supervisors to quickly determine which routes require attention.

Article courtesy of the *Eastern Iowa Reporter* published in September 2014 by NALC Branch 373 in Cedar Rapids, IA.

MANAGEMENT'S SPY POINTS: THE TIMES THEY AREN'T A-CHANGING

My mornings at the Williamsville P.O. start off just about the same way everyday. At 8:05, my supervisor will get on the P.A. and wish everybody a "good morning", to which about a half a dozen carriers will reply, from every corner of the building, "not anymore". And even though I know it's coming, it still makes me laugh. Then after that it normally becomes the same, "blah,blah,blah". Except on this particular morning, the supervisor had something different to say. He began to explain about some changes being made in local upper management and a commitment that was about to be partaken by the new regime. I actually got my hopes up... for a second. I thought to myself, could this be a new commitment to safety? Could it be a new commitment to the Carrier Connect program? Would it be a new commitment to supplying letter carriers with the tools to actually do their jobs, like rubber bands and hold cards? My head was spinning with all the possibilities of what could be done to make my station a safer and better place to work. I was on pins and needles when my supervisor announced to all that THE most important thing to this new management group was... a commitment to do a better job of disciplining carriers that miss their MSP points. Really? That's it? Surely, you jest. Apparent, Shirley, they don't.

I was then tortured with talk of spread sheets and discipline that would begin as official discussions and graduate to something and then to something else, and then again, all I heard was "blah, blah, blah".

If you know me, you'll know that I honestly do not believe that the relationship between management and labor always has to be contentious but after announcements like this, I have a hard time defending that point. Who in the name of Patrick Donahoe still believes that scanning MSPs is a priority AND that spending thousands of dollars to monitor, discipline and defend these crimes against humanity is necessary?

These MSPs have become NOTHING but devices to use to discipline letter carriers. Does anybody in management know that if they truly believe that letter carriers are trying to circumvent the system that they have the ability, via GPS, to watch us anytime they want? Do they really believe that if I miss one MSP for any reason, I need an official discussion?

Let's say that we have 1000 routes in Branch 3 with each route having 15 scans for a total of 15,000 required scans a day. Is it hard to believe that as human beings, using outdated equipment, there is almost a 100% chance that dozens of scans are going to be missed everyday? And the postal service is going to waste everybody's time and money to pursue the carriers that perform these heinous acts?

So, now we're back to this bullshit, also known as "the flavor of the month" and if you ask your supervisor why they are doing it, chances are that they will tell you that they are doing what they are told to do by their boss and their boss and their boss. Is there one person in management who can tell me why scanning MSP's is important or even necessary in today's postal world, so important that we need to issue discipline?

I have a suggestion for any carrier issued discipline for missing an MSP: make them pay! Use your contractual rights to meet with your steward. Write an extremely detailed explanation of the events that led up to this mortal sin you have committed. Did a dog startle you and make you run from the box before you scanned it? Was the mail on hold? Did you have a parcel or a piece of accountable mail that caused you to forget? Did you hand the mail to the customer causing you to forget? Or perhaps the most unbelievable reason: You actually did scan the bar code!

Although I'm sure that none of these reasons will be "acceptable", you should be a part of that grievance from the P.D.I. all the way up to the formal A meeting with the station manager. You have the right to be in every meeting every step of the way and I strongly suggest you take advantage of that. Even if the result isn't perfect, it's an opportunity to learn about the grievance procedure on their dime. This is especially true for all the new employees that have been hired.

Perhaps it's time to get NALC public enemy #1 involved. Instead of trying to convince the country that the postal service is hemorrhaging cash, Daryll Issa (boooo) could ask Patrick Donahoe why he is wasting so much money on this issue. He can't really say that he's just doing what his boss is telling him, can he? He is THE boss. He'd have no reasonable answer and he'd have to go with the same answer your mother used to give you when you were a kid: "Because I said so."

~ Jack Lewis, Williamsville

CARRYING YOURSELF THROUGH 90 DAYS

How do I make it through 90 working days? Since I was once hired and worked as a CCA, I understand what is needed and expected of the position. My best advice is: work hard, appease management, be logical, and have fun.

Working under management can sometimes be a hassle: laboring six days a week, little to no annual leave, non paid holidays, being moved from station to station, etc. In all honesty, as long as you try your best, work safe, and do your assigned work in the scheduled amount of time (or close to) they will appreciate that. Try to go the extra mile and call back to help other CCAs and regulars. Management will see that you are willing to work and carriers will be thankful for the help.

All in all, my work experiences with the USPS has been great. I believe that if you work hard and earn a paycheck, you will make the best out of your career with the Postal Service. After all "We work so we can have fun"

Have a great summer and be safe!

~ Cheers, Rory Parker, Eastside

Article courtesy of THE BUZZ published in August 2014 by NALC Branch 3 in Buffalo, NY.

from the editor-guy

So...you just made Regular
and your supervisor tells you,
“Now that you are a Regular
you *HAVE* to make your
doctor appointments on your
scheduled days off.”

Check the correct answer:
True False

It's always been my understanding that management is not to interfere with medical care that an employee is receiving.

For example, if a physician schedules an appointment (based on the physician's availability) management does not have the right to tell an employee that they can't be there and must reschedule.

Additionally, a Letter Carrier has the Right to use Sick Leave in conjunction with any medical treatment or diagnostic procedures.

I don't remember how it is that I came to believe this, but it's probably because I heard an NALC member tell me that this is the way that things work. When this issue was recently posed to me, I gave the answer that I knew to be right.

But, then? I got to wondering... Why *does* this make sense?

I'M GOING TO LET YOU IN ON A SECRET.

Just about anything that you can do or think about doing as a Letter Carrier is addressed in some type of a manual, handbook or regulation someplace! Really? Yup.

The manual that sets up the language which protects your Right to medical treatment is the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). Specifically, Section 513 of the ELM.

At the risk of getting too technical, here's the exact language to think about: “**Section 513.11 Sick Leave for Employee Incapacitation** Sick leave insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated for the performance of duties because of illness, injury, pregnancy and confinement, and **medical (including dental or optical) examination or treatment.**” (emphasis added)

OUT THERE



What's my point? You have the Right to use Sick Leave for medical treatment. **This is a Right which is embedded in Section 513 of the ELM.**

In reality, there have—many times—been disagreements between the union and management when an employee tells the supervisor that they need to go to a doctor appointment on an upcoming date during their regularly scheduled tour.

Our position is that management may not require us to schedule medical appointments off the clock *because the ELM establishes our Right to use Sick Leave for medical treatment!*

Additionally: local management cannot, unilaterally, establish a local policy which conflicts with Article 10, Section 2 of the National Agreement which deals with Leave Regulations.

Finally, acknowledging that you have Rights also implies that you have Responsibilities. As soon as you know that you are scheduled for medical care, submit a PS Form 3971 requesting Sick Leave if you know that the appointment is scheduled during a time that you would normally be on the clock.

So, with all of that said, should you check “True” or “False”?

BASIL ZUNIGA



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

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

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

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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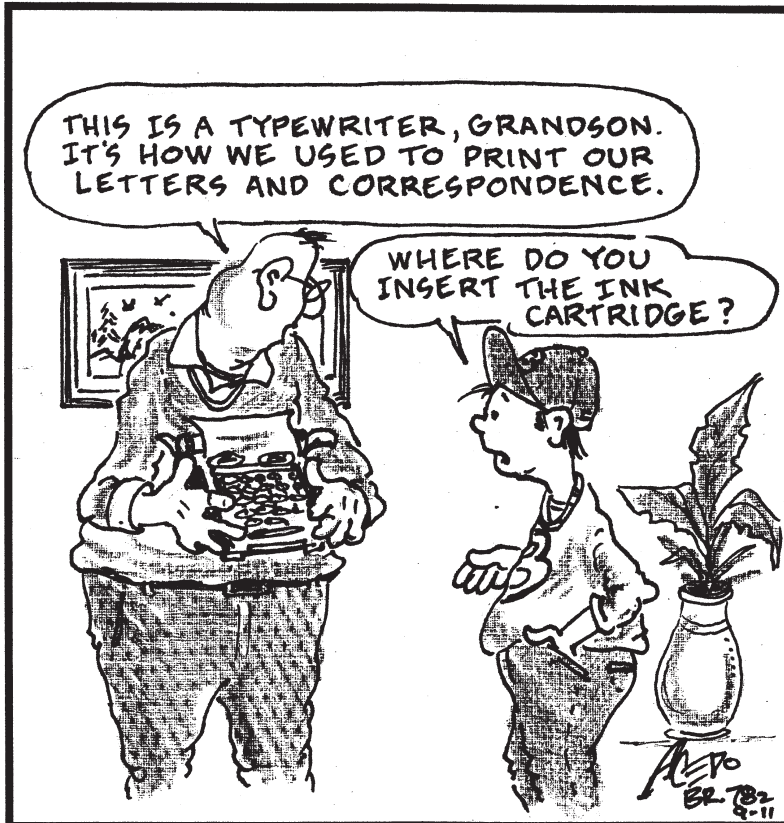
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Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

OUT THERE



In Memorium

Luther Lane
August 17, 2014

—
Bill Marchand
September 6, 2014

More details in the pages of this newsletter.

Branch Picnic

Look for details in this edition's centerfold...

**October 12, 2014
Jastro Park
10:00 a.m. until ?**

The web version of the newsletter sometimes includes information not contained in the original print version...