

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



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AVENAL
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MOJAVE
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BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 2018

A REASON FOR HOPE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

***BUSY, FRANTIC HOLIDAY TRAVEL,
RECONNECTING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS !
COUNTLESS JOYFUL FESTIVE GATHERINGS,
WARM, GLOWING FIREPLACE EMBERS !***

***WITH A WISH FOR GOODWILL,
AND GOOD HEALTH IN OUR HEARTS,
COMPASSION, CARING, IS WHERE IT STARTS !***

***WE "MUST" RESIST A DIVIDED NATION !
NO FEAR, NO ANGER, NO INTIMIDATION !
CONGRESS MUST MEND OUR IMMIGRATION !***

***WE PRAY FAMILIES AND CHILDREN, ARE REUNITED,
THIS TREATMENT WE MUST RESIST !
OUR NATION IS A MELTING POT,
AMERICA IS BETTER THAN THIS !***

***THE CLIMATE ON MOTHER EARTH IS CHANGING,
SCIENCE DOESN'T LIE !
SO CRITICAL, TO JUST IGNORE,
TOO DANGEROUS, TO DENY !***

***MULTI COLORED LEAVES ABOUND,
THE AIR A CHILL, IT'S FALL,
WISHING A CHEERFUL HOLIDAY GREETING,
TO HUMANITY, ONE AND ALL !***

*by MARK RAMIREZ
The Golden Empire Branch 782*

Midterm results provide hope for letter carriers...and America



Fredric V. Rolando

Thanks to the hard work of the dozens of letter carriers, NALC officers and staff who worked on the AFL-CIO Labor 2018 campaign, as well as to the hundreds of members who volunteered in the campaign's get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts—and to the tens of thousands of NALC contributors to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) whose resources made it all possible—letter carriers can celebrate a huge victory in the 2018 midterm elections. In all, 219 of the 229 candidates we supported with LCPF contributions won election last month. These pro-letter carrier candidates, regardless of political affiliation, earned our support

by backing our interests on legislative and regulatory matters—and we showed our appreciation by working to get them elected. That is just the way democracy is supposed to work.

Two years ago, after the 2016 election, I warned about the changed circumstances in Washington and the challenges posed by one-party government, particularly when much of the ruling party was openly hostile to labor unions and federal employees. We handled those challenges by working with our many Republican allies in Congress and maintaining the overwhelming support of congressional Democrats. This helped us defeat budget attacks on our pensions and health benefits and rebuff efforts to weaken the Postal Service through service cuts and restrictions on its activities.

Today, we once again face changed, but much better, circumstances. The return of a balanced Congress, with Democrats controlling the House and Republicans controlling the Senate, offers real hope for advancing a positive agenda in Congress. That's because we have allies in both parties, and now both sides have an equal seat at the table as we negotiate the terms of new legislation. Our goal is to achieve the kind of postal reform we've been fighting to promote for more than 10 years—reform that strengthens the Postal Service without attacking postal employees or USPS's vital networks. Enacting non-partisan postal legislation with bipartisan majorities is now within our reach.

In May 2018, I wrote in this space that it was time to consider alternative approaches to postal reform—ones that did not involve mandatory Medicare integration, an idea fraught with policy and political complications. The results of the

midterm election do not change that assessment. Medicare policy and politics are likely to remain prohibitively difficult. But there are plenty of good ideas for achieving successful postal reform and we will pursue them vigorously.

No matter what policies we advocate, our goals remain the same: to protect the interests of our active and retired letter carriers while advancing the general public's interest in a thriving Postal Service. Our hope is that the White House will drop its flirtation with privatization and work in a bipartisan way to help us achieve these goals.

The conventional wisdom has it that our country is hopelessly divided. The partisan fights over voter suppression in Georgia during the midterm election and the messy politics of recounts in Florida certainly point in that direction. But I think the 2018 midterms offer another kind of hope for America—and a kind of hope of which letter carriers can be proud. That is the hope for a revival of our nation's democracy.

Voter turnout in the 2018 election increased dramatically. An estimated 116 million Americans voted on or before Election Day. Approximately 50 percent of eligible voters cast ballots, the highest midterm participation rate since 1914. The total number of votes jumped by 33 million from the last midterm election in 2014, when voter turnout was just 37 percent. Voters from both parties, as well as independents (which make up the largest bloc of voters in the United States), turned out in record numbers. That is progress and a cause for hope for our democracy.

What makes it even better is that letter carriers and the Postal Service contributed to this encouraging trend. Voting by mail is exploding in popularity. According to the Vote at Home Institute, more than 40 million Americans received their ballots in the mail this year. We know from experience that citizens who receive their ballots by mail are much more likely to vote than those voting at traditional polling sites. Indeed, voter turnout rates in pure Vote at Home states, where 100 percent of voters receive their ballots in the mail (Colorado, Oregon and Washington), recorded turnout in excess of 60 percent last month. Other states that rely heavily on mail ballots, such as Arizona, California and Montana (where 75 percent voted by mail), also led the way on higher turnout. This is good for our democracy and good for our country.

Like the rest of you, I'm glad to see the election season end and the holiday season begin. It's time to leave the partisan bickering behind. It's also time to focus on what unites us as Americans, most notably our commitment to democracy. If progress requires hope, then we have what we need to start making progress in the new year. Happy holidays, brothers and sisters.

December 2018

The Postal Record

NEWS & INFORMATION

December 04, 2018

White House Postal Task Force releases long-awaited report

Today, the Trump administration's task force released its report evaluating USPS finances and operations, United States Postal Service: A Sustainable Path Forward ([viewable in link below](#)). Due to the White House on August 10, the administration sat on the report for nearly four months, leaving both the Postal Service and Congress to delay meaningful action on addressing core issues in order to wait for these recommendations.

Although NALC is still studying the report and will report on its details in greater detail, NALC President Fredric Rolando called the report "a huge missed opportunity filled with legislative recommendations that are likely to be dead on arrival in Congress."

Rather than fully addressing the artificial financial crisis caused by the 2006 retiree health pre-funding mandate enacted by Congress in 2006, the report launches an all-out attack on the collective bargaining rights of postal employees – calling for the revocation of the right to negotiate wages by America's postal unions. "NALC totally rejects this attack on hard-working American workers and we are confident that bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress will too," Rolando said.

The report also calls for massive service cuts – allowing USPS to reduce the frequency and quality of delivery services, which would result in huge job losses for city letter carriers. It also advocates forcing the Postal Service to dramatically raise prices for the delivery of packages, the fastest growing and highly profitable segment of the Postal Service's volume. Indeed, an industry coalition representing package shippers, the Package Coalition, warned that the recommendations would "limit access and raise prices" on package delivery, harming consumers and the Postal Service alike.

The good news is the report does not expressly call for the privatization of the Postal Service, though it does highlight the privatization of postal systems such as Germany and New Zealand. "This is a victory for the public and the NALC," President Rolando said. "Our efforts to mobilize the public and a majority of Congress to oppose privatization and to support H.Res. 933 and S. Res. 633 have paid off."

Source — <https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/white-house-postal-task-force-releases-long-awaited-report>

But he added: "This report, particularly in its suggestions for regulatory and administrative changes, poses a serious threat to affordable universal service. We will remain vigilant and fight any efforts to damage the public interest in such service."

Another positive in an otherwise disappointing report, was the Task Force's apparent embrace of the postal workforce's proposal to reduce the retiree health pre-funding burden by limiting the amount to be pre-funded to the actual vested liability for such benefits ([recommendations viewable in below links](#)). NALC urges Congress to adopt this proposal before the current Congress ends.

"The delay of this long-overdue report has resulted in another missed opportunity in the 115th Congress to advance real measures that would strengthen the Postal Service and return financial stability to this agency," Rolando said. "NALC is committed to restoring USPS to financial stability while protecting its employees and strengthening the universal mail delivery network."

NALC will thoroughly review this report and provide its feedback to Congress and the administration while keeping letter carriers aware of any updates.

Knowledge can help you prepare. Read for yourself...

Workforce Submission to the White House Task Force on the USPS

https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/USPS_A_Sustainable_Path_Forward_report_12-04-2018.pdf

An Executive Summary of the Workforce Submission

<https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/Postal-Service-Workforce-Submission.pdf>

Policy Options for Eliminating or Reducing the Prefunding Burden (summary chart)

<https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/Postal-Service-Workforce-Policy-Options.pdf>

History of Postal Reform Legislation

<https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/body/Legislative-Background-and-Status-of-Postal-Reform.pdf>

Minutes of the November 2018 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery, at 7:00 p.m. on the 21st day of November, 2018 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, David Treto. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Oildale, Shafter and South. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Webmaster, Rick Plummer; Photographer, Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer, Debbie Guillet; Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes and Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the October 24, 2018 meeting were read by Assistant Recording Secretary Norma Hamer and accepted with the correction that the meeting was October 24 not September.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Crystal Chavez, Shafter; Timothy Collins, Lamont; Ronald Rush, Dole Ct.; Brandie Hickey, Camino Media; Santos Perez, South; Brittany Staabs, Tehachapi; Jessica Barnett and Hector Rodriguez, Brundage.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega reported that everything is good. Basil Zuniga reported that due to prior commitments he was not able to attending the newsletter folding and had the printer fold the newsletter last month, so only the labels had to be put on the newsletters. He discussed the articles in the newsletter about veterans Bob Mitchell, Mike Newton and David Bridges. There were also articles about new retirees and the scholarships available to members and their families. The newsletter was big, 24 pages, the web version has 36 pages. He gave Webmaster, Rick Plummer a thumb drive with the newsletter before the meeting and it is already available to view. There are lots of photos from the picnic on the web version. If you want a copy it can be down loaded from the website. If you want a higher quality print Rick can send that to you. Basil reported that he would like to do something similar next year on Veteran's Day. Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee thanked all Vets. He reported that he has Condor tickets available for the "Teddy Bear Toss" night. The tickets are valued at \$26.00 and are selling for \$20.00. There will not be tickets to the BC Planetarium. He asked if any member would like to be on the committee. He then discussed the recycling plans. Kim Gerdes reported that there were no book sales this month, 600 remaining. Mark Ramirez, HBP Representative, discussed the changes in the NALC plan. Open season is until December 10. See him after the meeting or call him if you have any questions. He reminded members that the NALC plan is union owned and not for profit plan.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that the Steward Meetings will be December 5th and 12th. The General meeting will be December 19th. The branch will provide dinner, please bring a dessert.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that the pay increase is effective Saturday, December 1st. He also reported that he received an e-mail from Calvin Brookings asking for new or gently used uniforms for the victims of the Camp Fire. Donations can be sent to Brian Bump, President Br. 133, North Highland, CA. A discussion was held regarding the bad air quality due to the fires north and south of us. Paul Greenfield reported that the Social and Recreation Committee will be providing each office in the city with cookies for the holidays.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$13,972.53 was collected for October and \$13,978.38 was collected for November.

TREASURERS REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

	November
Beginning Balance	\$75,310.56
Dues and Income	\$20,559.71
Total Balance	\$95,870.27
Expenses	\$18,521.89
Ending Balance	\$77,348.38

Non-Members November 2018

Downtown Station

Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz

Lamont

100% UNION!!!

South Station

Daniel Zuniga
Marty Martinez
Chanthorn Ped

Mojave

100% UNION!!!

Ridgecrest

100% UNION!!!

Brundage/East Bakersfield

100% UNION!!!

Shafter

Mae D. Voights
Laura M. New

Hillcrest

100% UNION!!!

Taft

K. J. Kaczmarek

Dole Court

100% UNION!!!

Tehachapi

B. C. Den Beeman
Christina Cronauer

Stockdale

James Oh
Mark D. Powell

Trona

100% UNION!!!

Camino Media

100% UNION!!!

Wasco

Eun Chong

Arvin

100% UNION!!!

Avenal

100% UNION!!!

California City

100% UNION!!!

Delano

Cynthia V. Quebral
Daniela Barreto

Edwards AFB

100% UNION!!!

*There are only 15
non-members in all
of the cities we serve...
Only two are CCAs.*

CCA names are in italics

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Shari Sharp. (22.00/22.00)

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

There were 44 members and 1 guest present.

Basil Zuniga asked Mike Towery for the dates of no penalty for December. Mike Reported that December 1 – 28 there will be no penalty overtime.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

KIM GERDES



Health Prescription: Christmas Humor on a Schtick

**NO CALORIES....
NO UNWRAPPING
NEEDED AT ALL**

Three of the scariest words found on any Christmas gift.... "SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED!"

After- Christmas sales fulfill a vital need: They give women something to do while men watch the bowl games.

MELANIE WHITE

My goal this Christmas is to be on both lists: **Naughty AND Nice.**

Thank goodness for the after-Christmas sales. It's hard to stop shopping cold turkey!

MELANIE WHITE

I have two issues: "Why are Dasher and Dancer always taking coffee breaks???" *Because they are Santa's Star Bucks* & "What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day".

PHYLLIS DILLER

A chicken crossing the road, is poultry in motion.

A man who fell into an upholstery factory is now fully recovered.

Doctors tell us, there are seven million people who are overweight. These of course are only round figures.

If at least two family members remain incarcerated at Christmas, we won't have to put the leaf in the dining table.

APRIL MAY

Is a life insurance policy a bad gift at Christmas? Be honest.

SMUG LEMUR

"I have good memories wrapped up in the word "Christmas". To me it's about family and memories, and the looks on caroler's faces, when I set the dogs on them"

BILL MAHER

Christmas is a baby shower that went way totally overboard!

Christmas sweaters are only acceptable, as a cry for HELP !

ANDY BOROWITZ

"A Christmas Miracle" is when your family doesn't get into a single argument all day long.

MELANIE WHITE

If you're not sure which presents Daddy wrapped... they are the ones that look like they were delivered by a backhoe.

**MAY YOUR LONGEST
LIST THIS CHRISTMAS BE
THE ONE THAT COUNTS
YOUR BLESSINGS!**

MARK "Post-Mark" RAMIREZ
NALC HBP Representative
Retired Letter Carrier
The Golden Empire Branch 782

***Santa, I am writing you this letter to let you know:
"YUP!! I was naughty this year — and furthermore, IT
WAS WORTH IT, you Chubby Judgmental Fuddy Duddy!!"***

SIGNED BY THE GUY YOU GAVE THE LUMP OF COAL TO LAST YEAR...

**Holiday Greetings from
each member of the
Branch 782 Executive Board
and all of
our Shop Stewards!!**

— In Memorium —

Otis Wesley Johnson Sept. 1, 1930 - Nov. 18, 2018



On Nov. 18th, Dad raised one more fist in the air for victory and decided his job here was done. It was a job well done.

Otis “Wes” was born in Roaring Springs, Texas, to Myrtle and Otis Karo Johnson. Shortly after Myrtle died during childbirth, Otis, at the age of 9, migrated to California with his father, two uncles, and four siblings, Vivian, Verna, Thomas “TJ,” and Lee. Traveling in a modified Model T Ford truck in the midst of the Dust Bowl, the trip took months as they had to work along the way to fund the trip and survive. What an adventure it must have been. After arriving in California, they found work in the fields from Bakersfield to Oregon and lived in tents, boxcars, or whatever shelter they could find.

At the age of 20, after spending much of his childhood working and getting a minimum amount of schooling, he volunteered to serve his country in the U.S. Army. From 1950-1954, he fought on the front line in Korea. At the end of that tour of duty, he served as a military prison guard in Georgia.

Shortly after his service ended, he began what would be a 34-year career with the U.S. Postal Service.

In 1957 he met a beautiful young woman named Billie Jean in a café in Shafter, CA. They married, settled in Bakersfield, and had five children: Jeannine, Wesley, Deanna, Calleen, and Eric.

Wes, also known as “Slick” to family and friends, enjoyed camping, fishing, golfing, woodworking, and Friday night poker. He was a Little League

Baseball coach and diehard Dodgers fan. But most of all, he was Dad and “Papa” and believed nothing was more important than family and keeping them together.

He gave his all to raise the kids — not without some resistance — and spent many of his thirty-two years of retirement traveling to the Pacific Northwest and overseas to be with them.

Dad’s family has now blossomed and he has been blessed with fourteen grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren, and many more that know him as Papa.

A life well lived. We love you, Papa!

A Celebration of Life service and reception was held at Greenlawn Southwest, 2739 Panama Lane, on December 10th at 1:30 p.m.

Prior to the Greenlawn Southwest service, there was also a Military Honors Funeral Ceremony at the National Cemetery on East Bear Mountain Boulevard and Highway 58 at 10:45 a.m., for those who were able to attend.

Source — <https://www.greenlawnmortuary-andcemetery.com/obituaries/Otis-Johnson-7/>



Bakersfield National Cemetery

WES SERVED FAITHFULLY

On 25 June 1950, nineteen year old Wes Johnson had been working at the Mobile Gas and Service Station in Shafter, California for some six months. Across the other side of the world, that day marked an event that would, in time, be an important part of his life: 75,000 soldiers from the North Korean People’s Army poured across the 38th parallel. This was the start of the Korean War.

A few months later, on 16JAN51, he joined the U.S. Army. Twenty years old, after graduating from bootcamp, he was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division. (It was the first unit to reach Korea directly from the United States; had already been there since 23JUL50; and had been involved in a number of bloody battles by the time Wes and other young American soldiers reported for duty.)



That tour of duty lasted eleven months. In many respects, that short period of time became a literal struggle for survival.

During the Wes Johnson military military honors service at the Bakersfield National Cemetery on December 10th, his youngest son Eric recounted that his Dad never talked much about his Army experiences. Over the course of years, his family learned that he had been involved in what is referred to as the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge from September 13 through October 15, 1951.



Private 2nd Class (E-2) Johnson with some of his buddies.

Eric told those of us in attendance that “Papa” eventually shared how he felt during the long, dark nights when incoming mortar rounds would burst and rain shrapnel on the men in their dug-in positions. In the morning light, part of the routine was to fan out and retrieve casualties who’d been wounded or killed.

Wes admitted that, like most of the other soldiers, he’d received flesh wounds but had never even considered reporting them in order to receive a Purple Heart.

Although Wes might not have wanted to talk much about what he went through, a little research about the Battle for Heartbreak Ridge reveals a significant line found in Wikipedia: *“Battles begun by bomb, bullet and shell were inevitably finished by grenade, trench knife and fists as formal military engagements degenerated into desperate hand-to-hand brawls.”*



At the end of “his” Korean war, Wes was reassigned to the Third Army at Camp Gordon, Georgia where he was posted as a guard at the U.S. Army Disciplinary Barracks for Convicted Criminals. He told Eric that many inmates were good guys who’d just done some stupid things.

On 15JAN54, Sargeant (T) Otis Wesley Johnson returned to civilian life credited with 3 years, 0 months and 0 days of military service.

...And then, he wanted a steady job!

Excerpt from the Eulogy by sons, Wes and Eric Johnson

After returning from their military service in the mid 50’s, the Johnson boys — Dad and his brothers, T.J. and Lee— found work with the post office in Downey, California in 1954. Soon after, they transferred to work at the post office in Bakersfield closer to their home in Shafter.



During the mid 50s Dad, Fred and his brothers made enough money to buy cars and motorcycles, and spent time together fixing them up and racing them.

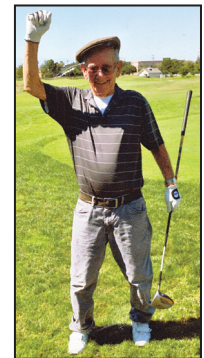
Seemed like a pretty good thing!

The most important event of the 50s occurred when Dad met Billy Jean (Mom) in 1957. Mom was working at the café at Smith’s corner. Dad and Fred were at the bar attached to the café and came over for a bite to eat. Dad asked Mom to dance to the 1956 Johnny Cash song “I Walk the Line” minutes after they met. Dad and Mom were married a year later and the Fifties ended with the birth of their first child, Jeannine.

60’s: Raising Babies Decade.....

The 60’s brought the addition of four more children, Wesley Dean October 1960, Deanna October 1964, Calleen January 1966, and, finally, Eric October 1967.

When Dad Wasn’t working a part time job at the sheds, doing lawn care or doing air conditioning repair with his brother T.J., he took the family to the beach as often as possible and held regular barbecues bringing family and friends together at the house on Palm Street.



During the early 1960s, Dad began his favorite hobbies: golf, poker and hunting with his brother in-law, Earl. With the help of Mom as the bookkeeper and organizer Dad started a Golf group with several friends and coworkers. They organized and held several large golf tournaments complete with prize money and trophies.

Continued on next page...

Poker nights also began in the 60's. Friends would come over Friday or Saturday night with snacks and beer and play through the evening. They always stopped at bedtime and kissed all of the Johnson kid's goodnight.



(l-r) Extracted from a March 20, 1968 picture: Letter Carriers Joe Gonzalez, Wes Johnson, Spike Berna, Jim Tillet and Pete Colbert.



Portion of a July 27, 1972 picture of Joe Santa Cruz and Wes Johnson at the California Ave. Annex

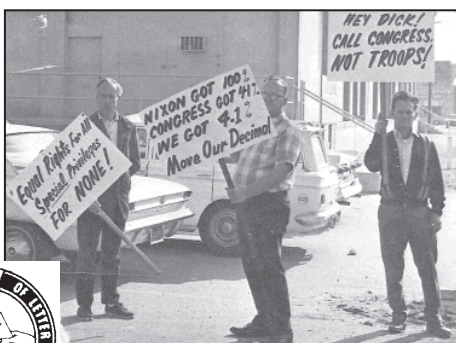


(l-r) Extracted from a 93304 Station group picture from the mid-1980s: Letter Carriers Basil Zuniga, Ray Brady, Paul McCarthy and Wes Johnson at Bakersfield's Stockdale Station.

Although work was steady, it was still hard to make ends meet — despite all of the part time jobs he worked!

Wes Johnson had learned in his Army experience that a time to fight required courage and willingness. **He was back on the front lines fighting for his family!**

This picture shows Wes Johnson on a different kind of "line" making his stand. Ultimately, his action and that of the many other Letter Carriers who went on strike in 1970 led to better wages and working conditions.



An immediate trigger for the strike was a Congressional decision to raise the wages of postal workers by only 4%, at the same time as Congress raised its own pay by 41%...

But why would he risk everything to go on strike?

"In 1956, the *Postal Record* reported that "the average American family" earned \$5,520 a year before taxes in 1955 while the average Letter Carrier earned \$4,400—\$1,120 a year less. In 1957, *U. S. News and World Report* reported that while the wages of workers in private industry had increased between \$20 and \$36 a week in the previous five years, Letter Carriers' wages had increased by a mere \$5.50. By 1960, Letter Carriers were having serious financial difficulties. Many worked two jobs to support their families, and their wives often were forced to work to supplement Carriers' meager income. A substantial number of Letter Carriers could not even qualify for an FHA loan to buy a home." (Excerpts from *Carriers in a Common Cause — A History of Letter Carriers*)

70's: Family First & "teenagers" years!

Early in the seventies Dad and Mom realized they needed to go their own way. But as a testament to their character and love for their family they set aside their differences and remained the best of friends. Almost immediately the annual trips to see Mom and the northwest family began. Dad took us kids and even some of our neighborhood friends to see the family. Dad spent the rest of the seventies raising teenagers, coaching baseball, fixing cars that his teenagers wrecked and continuing the annual summer vacation trips.

Coaching baseball was a family affair. Dad was the manager (coach), Wesley Jr. the Assistant Coach and the girls, Deanna and Calleen, helped out keeping score and order in the dugout while Eric and the neighbor buddies played ball. As a manger he won the league championship twice, coached the All Star team...and may have led the league in ejections!

The 80's: Empty nest and Retirement...

The mid-eighties brought the much deserved reward of retirement after over thirty-four years of postal service. Shortly after that point, Dad took up the hobby of wood working.

The eighties marked the pinnacle of his golfing career when he scored an Ace (hole in one) on the second hole, a 125 yard par 3, at Kern River Golf course on May 6, 1984 with sons Eric and Wes, and Al Behill and Ray Franey looking on!

Fishing and poker continued throughout the eighties along with routine trips to see the kids and family in the northwest.

He enjoyed being with his family. **"FAMILY" was the most important thing in his life!**

His work family at South Station was pretty important, too They were pretty happy he was retiring happy and healthy!!

After 34 years, Wes Retired on July 31, 1988!!!



Slamming that paper time card and joining Last Punch Bunch!



Ruben Fabela presents Retirement Award



Ramon Herrera and Wes and the food!



Clerk Danny Chavez and Wes



Wes casing mail on Route 421 on his last day. (Please note: See the volume in the case? These were the pre-DPS days. We cased every letter. Flats in a horizontal flat case had to be worked differently and were "routed" and even "streeted" for newbies. Also, he still has almost two feet on the ledge he still has to case...)

"The MAN"
 I'm fore the MAN that
 when in trouble does
 all that he can
 that puts up a fight
 to streighen things out
 and make them go right.
 He thought at the time
 out of the valley
 he would never climb
 he did and is still
 going strong in spite
 of the troubles that
 happen along

I say for his comfort
 when matters seem
 bad tomorrow he will
 smile at the troubles
 he's had

Wes Johnson

**His children
 had no idea that
 Wes would even
 think about
 writing poetry...**

(L-R) Unknown,
 Henry Garcia,
 Frank Diaz,
 Unknown, Wes
 Johnson, Rick
 Cartier, Ramon
 Herrera and Frank
 Thomasy enjoy
 the food at the
 potluck!



— In Memorium —

DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2018.

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, 2018.

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, 2019. (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, 2019.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate

ate 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.

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.

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 2018-19 school year.

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

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. _____ City _____ State _____

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____

Signature of branch officer

Signature of NALC parent member
(or spouse if deceased)

Printed name of branch officer

Last 4 digits of Social Security No. _____

Title _____ Date _____

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2018, 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.

2019 Carl J. Saxsenmeier

Scholarship Program

The California State Association of Letter Carriers (CSALC) is now accepting applications for the 2019 Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship Program. **All applications must be received by the Scholarship Chair by January 4, 2019.** The Chair will send scholarship packets to all applicants by the end of January 2019. The scholarships are available to the children or grandchildren of members of NALC Branches within the State of California who have not served in a supervisory capacity in the previous two (2) years from the date of 2018 award announcement. Applicant's parent / grandparent must be a member in good standing of the NALC for at least one year prior to applying. Applicant must be a high school senior when applying. Saxsenmeier Scholarship awards are issued in the year of graduation and are not renewable.

Jeff Parr

Saxsenmeier Scholarship Chair

1177 Levine Dr-Santa Rosa, Ca 95401

707-523-1818

Saxsenmeier Scholarship Application

(Please Print)

Student's Name _____

NALC Member's Name _____

Home Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Home Telephone _____

Cell / Fax _____

Email Address _____

Applicant's Signature _____

NALC Member Signature _____ Relationship to Applicant _____

Local NALC Branch Officer Signature required for verification of member in good standing:

NALC Branch Officer Signature _____ Title _____

Branch Officer Printed Name & Branch
Number _____

Guest Editorial

THE VP's COMMENTS

by John J. Pfiffner, Vice-President
NALC Branch 373

I have always admired Franklin Roosevelt as one of our greatest presidents. He was a man who overcame physical disabilities to lead our country during two of the worst crises it has ever faced.

Mr. Roosevelt assumed the presidency in 1933 during the depths of the Great Depression. He worked tirelessly to lift our country out of the depths of the Great Depression by passing legislation to get Americans working again. President Roosevelt's series of programs to try and accomplish that goal became known as the "New Deal".

One of the most successful platforms of those programs — which still exists today — is Social Security.

One of the very first pension plans in the U.S. began after the start of the Civil War. In 1862, legislation was passed to provide benefits to soldiers who received debilitating war wounds as a direct consequence of military service. In 1890 the law was changed so that any disabled Civil War veteran could qualify for benefits. In 1906 the law was again changed to make "old-age" a qualification for benefits.

The law also was extended to the widows and orphans of Civil War Veterans, who would receive a pension equal to the amount of the deceased soldier. Of course, this allowed some people to take advantage of the program. Young women married aged veterans so they could inherit the soldier's pension as a war widow.

The last widow of a union veteran who was still receiving a pension from the Civil War was Gertrude Janeway, who died in 2003. Gertrude was 18 when she married 81 year old John Janeway. At the time of her death she was still receiving a \$70 check each month from the Veterans Administration.

DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION, THE POVERTY RATE AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS WAS 50%. In the early 1930s a physician named Dr. Francis Townsend, enlisted the aid of five million senior citizens to support his program of giving Americans over the age of 60 a \$200 monthly pension.

This pushed President Roosevelt into forming a committee to study the issue. From that, Congress passed in 1935 the Social Security Act. The Act provided old-age benefits to workers, which would be financed from a payroll tax on employers and employees.

Over the years the Act has been amended several times. In 1939, the spouse and minor children of a retired worker could receive benefits. In 1950, retirement benefits increased and COLAs were added to the program. In 1954 a disability component was added to Social Security. In 1961, early retirement was added, with reduced benefits of course. In 1965, President Johnson added Medicare benefits to retirees under his Great Society program.

From its very conception, Social Security has been under attack by the Republican Party.

From the presidential election of 1936 through 1949, Republicans have attacked the program as socialism and a fraud on "the working class". But with the Mr. Roosevelt's and Harry Truman's elections, the Social Security Act was expanded to near universal coverage. By the middle 1950s Social Security, as it is comprised today, with universal and disability coverage, was cemented into the nation's fabric.

Republican President Dwight Eisenhower called those who wanted to abolish Social Security "stupid" because of its popularity with both Democrat and Republican voters.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Social Security Bill in Washington, DC on August 14, 1935.

In 1983 President Reagan, touting the argument that Social Security was becoming insolvent, passed a law to require new federal hires to be under Social Security and it also raised the retirement age of younger workers to 66 and 67 years of age.

During George W. Bush's years in office, he championed privatization by allowing young workers to invest in individual accounts, thus eliminating the base benefit of Social Security. But, Mr. Bush was never able to overcome the broad support that Social Security has among Americans. His proposals never made it into legislation before Congress, especially after the Democrats took control in 2006.



Currently two thirds of senior citizens rely on Social Security for almost all of their retirement income.

It is expected that — with the loss of pension programs — the percentage of senior citizens who rely solely on Social Security will increase as younger people age.

Last year, Republican Rep. Tom Garret of Virginia, introduced a bill called the Student Security Act of 2017. His bill would allow young people to pay off their student loans with their future Social Security benefits. *However, this hoax would have younger people choose between financial security now versus later when they are older.*

Age 65 snuck up on you?? If you've been around 64 years, Nope.

When you have Medicare as the primary payer and the NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option, charges for services and supplies covered by Medicare are paid **IN FULL** between Medicare and the Plan. And, when Medicare applies the calendar year deductible and coinsurance to services payable by Part A or Part B, the Plan pays 100% of the balance resulting in no out-of-pocket costs to you!

When Medicare is primary payer and covers the charges, you are not required to: 1) Pre-certify a hospital confinement; and, 2) File a claim for covered charges.

If you are approaching age 65, or are age 65 and retired, you need to understand the importance of having total medical and prescription drug coverage! You may be in good health today. But, that could change unexpectedly. You are advised to enroll in the Medicare Part B **without delay** when you are eligible. **THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO DO THIS IS PERMANENT, EXPENSIVE AND IRREVOCABLE.**

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) Once you approach age 65, you will receive notice from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that you are eligible to enroll in Medicare Part B. If you are receiving Social Security benefits, once you enroll, the premium is deducted from your monthly Social Security benefits. Medicare Part B benefits help you pay for doctor charges, diagnostic services, ambulance charges, surgeries, medical equipment and supplies, and covered services not covered or payable under Medicare Part A. When you are enrolled in the NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option and Medicare Part B, your Medicare Part B plan will pay benefits as the primary payor (pays first). Your Medicare Part B claims are transmitted electronically to the NALC Health Benefit Plan High Option where we will pay the Medicare Part B deductible and coinsurance on covered services. **You will not have any out-of-pocket expense since we supplement Medicare's payment up to 100% of the covered charge.**

You can get more information about Medicare plan choices by calling 800-633-4227 or at www.medicare.gov. **Always rely on the NALC Health Benefit Plan OFFICIAL APPROVED BROCHURE (RI 71-009) for complete detailed information of the Plan's benefits when Medicare is not paying for the service or supply.**

But here is what I truly believe is the reason for Republican attacks on Social Security: *There is no disputing that the Republican Party is in the pockets of Big Business.*

For every dollar that the average American pays in social security taxes, corporations have to match it dollar for dollar. The only figure I could find on how much the federal government collected in social security taxes — *from individuals and from businesses* — was \$770 billion in 2015.

If Republicans could eliminate social security taxes, Big Business would save billions of dollars in taxes which would go straight into the pockets of America's wealthiest.

This would further exacerbate wealth inequality in the United States.

The majority of postal workers pay into Social Security. We also have what is called the "three-legged stool of retirement". The three legs are: Social Security benefits, postal retirement pension and of course the Federal Employee's Retirement System (FERS).

Postal workers are fortunate to have this "retirement stool". The notion of a retirement pension in the private sector is all but forgotten. *We must do everything we can to protect our retirement, right along with all the other pay and benefits that our National Agreement affords us.*

And one of the best ways to do this is to vote for politicians who will protect our pay and benefits, as well as those of the middle class. **YOUR retirement depends upon it!**

Article courtesy of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa NALC Branch 373 May 2018
Eastern Iowa Reporter: John, I hope I meet you one of these days!!!





Thrift Savings Plan

by John Syacsure, Vice-President
NALC Branch 4374

There's no better time than now to brainstorm ways that you can reduce some day-to-day spending and increase your TSP savings for 2019!

Think about this: How about bringing lunch from home once or twice a week instead of buying lunch at work? Or skipping the daily Starbucks/Tim Horton's drive thru and bringing your coffee from home?

Write down your 2019 TSP savings goal and figure out the steps you'll take to reach it. *The better you take care of your TSP now, the better it can take care of YOU in retirement!* Listed below (Table 1) are some simple ways to save a few dollars every day — and an idea of how that money can grow over the years.

All "figures assume a 6% annual rate of return compounded monthly and do not include matching contributions.

The best time to start contributing to your TSP account is **NOW**. This way, saving becomes a habit. Also, you are "paying yourself first" by setting aside retirement funds before you are tempted to spend the money on other things.

(Table 2) below illustrates the impact of saving early for two savers, both age 25. The first scenario depicts a saver who invests \$200 every month for 40 years.

Assuming a 6% annual rate of return, this saver would have accumulated \$400,289 by the age of 65.

Small changes CAN bring big results.

The second scenario shows a saver who does not start saving at age 25, but decides to wait five years. At a \$200 per month savings rate and a 6% annual rate of return, the account value by the time this saver reaches age 65 is \$286,367 — a significant amount less than in the first scenario because the five-year delay means five years of forgone earnings and compounding.

In fact, under this set of assumptions, a saver who waits five years would have to save almost \$280 per month to achieve the same results as the saver in the first scenario.

Remember that starting your retirement savings EARLY is important because **the longer you wait, the more difficult it can become to reach your financial goals.**

By waiting, you may find yourself having to set aside a higher proportion of your income for retirement. Also, you will have forgone any earnings that could have compounded during those missed early years.

Last but not least, **DO NOT** miss out on **FREE MONEY** from your agency or service. *You should consider contributing no less than 5% of your salary to the TSP.* If you do, you will receive the maximum Agency/Service Matching Contributions.

Table 1	You'd Contribute...	In 20 Years You'd have...	In 30 Years You'd have...	In 40 Years You'd have...
1 mobile app (\$1)	\$30 per month	\$13,860	\$30,135	\$59,745
1 bottled water (\$1.50)	\$45 per month	\$20,790	\$45,200	\$89,615
1 coffee (\$3.50)	\$105 per month	\$48,515	\$105,475	\$209,105
1 dry-cleaned shirt (\$4)	\$120 per month	\$55,445	\$120,540	\$238,980
1 take-out lunch (\$7)	\$210 per month	\$97,030	\$210,950	\$418,215
1 short taxi ride (\$8)	\$240 per month	\$110,890	\$241,085	\$477,955

Table 2	Savings Per Month	Years of Investing	Rate of Return	Account Value at Age 65
Scenario 1	\$200	40	6.00%	\$400,289
Scenario 2	\$200	35	6.00%	\$286,367
REALLY. Think about this...	\$280	35	6.00%	\$400,289

Article courtesy of the Center Line, Michigan NALC Branch 4374 November 2018 *Front Lines*. Thank You So Much, Editor Nicole Wheatley!!!

2018 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



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

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

** Call for approvals Organ Transplants, DME Surgeries InPatient*

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

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

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

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

MARK RAMIREZ
NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative

(661) 398-6075

How do you find NALC/CIGNA (PPO) (OAP) Providers and Pharmacies?

Go to NALC.ORG.

Under "Member Benefits"
NALC Health Benefit Plan,

Click on **HBP Website (Center of Page)**

Under **Quick links,**

Click on **"Locate Network Retail Pharmacy" - or CIGNA.**

Click on **Healthcare (OAP) Online Provider Directory**

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

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

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

Dicktation

by John “Cementhead” Dick,
NALC Branch 3126 Vice-President

There it was, a plastic Santa in a plastic sleigh sitting on the porch somewhere along US-12 in southwestern Michigan. Early November, with the autumnal leaves still gracefully dancing in the crisp air, it was somehow an astonishing sight to see.

As I rode the Great White Steed down that that two-laned highway, three weeks before Thanksgiving, I was reminded that the Holiday season was just a mere few weeks away.

That plastic figurine with that long white beard – as I passed it at 60 miles per hour – spoke to me. “Hey boy, you know what you got to do. You are part of this thing.” It is time to get out the red suit, the long flowing wig and beard, the big black hoots, and the resounding ‘Ho Ho Ho’ bellow kept far back in the recesses of your id.” Soon, it is time not to play Santa, **BUT TO BE SANTA...**

This whole thing started out of necessity.

Just before the Christmas season of 1993, I found myself

pitifully short of funds for holiday gifts. I was recovering from a divorce and a motorcycle accident *and* looking for a way to make some quick bucks. I even ran an ad in a local newspaper: **“SANTA FOR HIRE”**. I wasn’t sure if anyone would even respond



First, one call came in, then another. I rushed out to buy the cheapest suit I could afford. It was amazing. I worked everything from corporate events to simple home visits. It was a

gig that got me through many Holiday seasons financially until I got my job with the USPS.

Now, it is a vocation. I put the suit on every Christmas season. But, never for money.

I wonder each year if this is the last hoorah for this Santa, until I get that certain letter in the mail...

I have been getting these letters since November of 2012. Santa gets a lot of letters, but the most precious to this Santa is the one I receive every year from one young lady with the nickname of “Bella”.

She writes me five pages of hand-written correspondence every year since 2012. And? I have faithfully written her back. She is an adult, married – and still believes in Santa.

In her beautiful handwritten script, she tells me every year about the ups and downs of her life.

When I read her first letter, I was confused. She told Santa about how she was estranged from her parents and they sent out a private investigator to find her.

“I have finally forgiven my parents for all they have done to me and my friends, and I have forgiven others as well and – even harder to do – I have forgiven myself for the things I have blamed myself for all these years.”

Santa replied, *“Dearest Bella, You talk of forgiveness, and I believe that is the key to having a life of fulfillment. We cannot control what other people do or say, the only thing we have control over is how we react to it, That is the only string we have to play in this life.”*

The next year, she sent Santa another letter. And, now, Santa always replies. Last year’s letter included a story about her closest friend who committed suicide. She even sent the news stories about the suicide along with her letter to Santa.

She was struggling with this loss. *“I think one of the hardest things is not knowing, and the mystery of his unexplained death. I wonder many things about you, Santa. Sometimes I wonder if it’s very hard for you being immortal.”*

Santa, with care, responded,

“My heart hangs heavy, and I cried when I read that part of your letter. One constant in life is learning how to deal with loss. Appreciate this day, dearest Bella, and savor every second, because none of us know how many more sunrises we are going to see, Life can be a fleeting mirage, even for an immortal, mythical figure like me.”

In that last letter she sent a photo of herself with her husband at Disneyland, It was amazing to finally see what she looked like. I had envisioned her much younger...

And what does she think of me? She seems too rational to really believe in Santa. Or maybe she needs to believe in Santa to cope with the burdens of this life.

For both of us, this is been a cathartic once-a-year cleansing of our souls.

It might do us all good if we had a Santa to write to. Most especially, if he wrote us back!

So – *once again this year* – I will don the red suit and bellow a hearty “HO HO HO!”

Yes, Bella. There *REALLY* is a Santa Claus. And I hope and pray that you write me again.

May you and your families have the Merriest Christmas ever!

from the editor-guy

I have followed John’s writings for quite some time in his great Branch 3126 newsletter. Insightful guy. And, when we finally met at an NALC convention, I discovered that he is quite a character!

This article has been “in reserve” for a number of years. I hope you enjoy it.

Article courtesy of the Royal Oak, Michigan NALC Branch 3126 December 2016 *New Vision*. A belated “Thank You” also goes out to another “old fart” friend, Paul Roznowski who is both Branch 3126 President *and* Editor. I’m glad this piece was finally reprinted!

Fred Acedo, our Branch 782 S.A.N.E. (Special Assistant Newsletter Editor), sends a few cartoons that are his Christmas presents to you. Humor helped him survive the years 1967 - 2004 when he, like you, was carrying mail ➡

Out tHeRe

“OuT tHeRe”



“OuT tHeRe”



“OuT tHeRe”





**A
VERY
"MERRY CHRISTMAS"
TO EVERYONE!!**

**Holiday spirit, Christmas cheer!
Festive music, end of year!
Colorful presents, a beautiful tree!
Families together, as it should be!**

**Many miles traveled, by auto, by air!
Arriving safely, with memories to share!
A golden baked turkey,
Mashed potatoes and ham!
Unbelievable stuffing, and candied yams!**

**The desserts are amazing,
Sample all, is my trend!
If I taste only one, I just might offend!**

**Compassion, caring, keeping the faith!
Blessing all families,
Stay healthy and safe!**

by MARK RAMIREZ
(Poet-at-Large)
Golden Empire Branch 782



NALC Branch 782 December General Meeting and Potluck

When: 7:00 p.m. on December 19, 2018

Where: 2628 F Street, Bakersfield, California

***Please, bring plenty
of desserts to share!***



ACED

Delivering the mail after dark? Remember this...

There is no blanket policy regarding delivery after dark because the issue to contend with is whether a particular Carrier on a particular route can **SAFELY** deliver the mail.

Bottom line: Each Carrier must weigh their individual circumstances about the type of delivery to be carried (door-to-door, walking, mounted, apartments, cluster boxes, etc.), their surroundings (unfamiliar, high crime, steps, animals and hills, etc.), and their own experiences in attempting to make after dark deliveries.

Some mail delivery may not be able to be made after daylight hours. Most apartments have lighted entryways and don't present the safety hazards that walking on uneven terrain, up and down stairs, going door-to-door and being exposed to the elements would. Because Carriers have the most experience and best knowledge of what is safe or unsafe in the performance of their duties, only the Carrier can make the decision on whether delivering after dark can be done safely.

So, if presented with a situation where you believe you'll be out delivering after dark, **REMEMBER THAT YOU DO HAVE RIGHTS** and remember this advice:

"OuT tHeRe"



1. Inform your supervisor in the morning of your need for auxiliary assistance in order to complete your street duties before dark. **THIS MEANS FILL OUT A FORM 3996.**

2. Notify your supervisor prior to heading out to the street that you may not be able to complete your duties on the street by dark.

3. When on the street — if you realize that you definitely will be out on after dark — call your supervisor and make him/her aware of that reality. Stress your concern for your safety and, again, request auxiliary assistance.

4. Assuming no help arrives and you are faced with darkening conditions, attempt to continue.

5. If, while attempting delivery, you literally experience a safety hazard (i.e. stumbling, tripping, hear dogs barking but are unable to clearly see if the dogs are a threat, and you are not able to see potential dangers using your LLV/ vehicle's outside mirrors...), call your supervisor.

6. Explain your situation and describe the conditions that you are dealing with. Notify them that you can no longer continue to safely deliver and then return to your station.
7. **COMPLETE PS FORM 1571** Curtailment form for the undelivered mail.

Be sure to hand the curtailment slip to the supervisor, and **ASK FOR A COPY!** *The copy is for your protection.* You could also ask for a PS Form 1767 - Notice of Hazardous Working Condition. This will help you document the safety hazards you encountered while attempting delivery after dark.

It is important to note that these instructions are not intended to endorse or encourage the unnecessary curtailment of any mail. It is about each Carrier's safety and the protection of the mail in our charge.

This is also not a blanket policy or approach. It very simply is the responsibility of each Carrier to measure their safety and ensure that they are working safely. **PERIOD.**

Article courtesy of the the December 2016 NALC Branch 1227 Wichita Falls, TX *Red River Carrier* and then reprinted in our December 2018 newsletter..

Delivering the mail after dark? Remember this...

Money Problems. Yup!

by Jim Baxter, Vice-President
NALC Branch 82

I AM HEARING that the Post Office is losing more money than the 5.5 billion prefunding dollars. I don't know exactly how much, but I certainly am not surprised.

The city of Portland is just a cog in the postal machine but if what is going on here is any indication of what's happening nationally, there is a real problem.

Here is an example of what I'm talking about: A Carrier called me the other day. He is on the full Overtime Desired List (ODL). He had asked the supervisor if he was needed to work his Scheduled Day Off (SDO) the next day. The supervisor told him that they were already "off assignment" and really needed him; but, he could not come in because the supervisor could not get permission to bring him in.

In fact, the Carrier did not work. He was not called because his station was "off assignment". His Steward filed a grievance. The Carrier was paid 8 hours of overtime and the non-ODL employee was paid an additional 50% for the eight hours.

Let's do the math. The grievant is a level 0 Carrier. He makes 45.00 per hour on overtime. That's \$360.00. The non-ODLers were paid an additional \$120.00. The cost of steward time and meeting time has to be 2 hours, probably at the overtime rate. That's another \$60.00 or so.

The Postal Service paid about \$550.00 for work NOT performed.

Hopefully, that didn't happen at more than four or five of the city stations on that day. At a minimum, the service is paying \$2,000.00 a day for work not performed.

Years ago a senior manager told me that the most expensive hour that the Service had was the penalty time hour @ double time. I told him that he was incorrect. I told him that the most expensive hour was paid for work not performed. He was sort of shocked but agreed. (My friend Santokh called that kind of grievance "shooting fish in a barrel".)

All of us really do want the Postal Service to survive and there is an easy fix.

What you do is go to the supervisor and find out who told them they could not bring in an ODLer without permission. You go to *THAT* person and find out who told them that they could not bring the ODLer. You keep moving up until you find the source. Then you give *THAT* person a letter of demand for the \$550.00.

After one letter of demand is paid, supervisors will all of a sudden be allowed to make the decision to properly staff.

My guess is that the instruction is coming from Western Area. **That whole place needs to be shut down.**

Duplication of management is the second most expensive hour that the Postal Service pays. Whether you are a Carrier or the Postmaster General we are all caretakers of the Service and we need to do what is right.

A Steward called me and told me that his manager told his Carriers that they were not supposed to call at 2:00 any more if they were not going to make their times. *The manager said that there was no contractual provision stating that a Carrier could change their times.*

I TOLD HIM THAT THE MANAGER WAS FULL OF CRAP.

The M-41 is a USPS manual which is very clear. The M-41 is the Letter Carrier Handbook. They are found — in every unit in the country which has a delivery unit — at each case in the route book.

Article 19 of the National Agreement between the USPS and the NALC states that all handbooks and manuals are part of the contract if they effect wages, hours or working conditions. Clearly, the M-41 is part of the contract.

We are to inform management when we cannot complete our assignments without going overtime. There are several Step 4 agreements that state the same thing. (Step 4s are National Settlements that carry the same weight as the words written in the National Agreement.

This manager was just making stuff up to try to pressure Carriers to go faster. If you hear about this in your office, don't be fooled. We are to inform management that we need overtime whether they want to hear it or not.

It is almost impossible to estimate how long it's going to take to deliver at this time of year. Tell them you need the time before you do the work. *THAT is YOUR responsibility.*

Another Steward called about a different issue.

I was asked, "So, when did 204-Bs become salaried employees?". I told the Steward that they are not salaried employees. The 204-Bs are entitled to pay for all the hours that they work. If they work overtime, they must be paid.

...The Postal Service paid about \$550.00 for work NOT performed...

I advised the Steward to file a grievance for the 204-B in question. Wage theft is against the law. Denying pay for the hours worked may even be criminal.

I bet many of you don't care if a 204-B gets cheated out of their pay. Well, if upper management cheats the 204-B today, tomorrow they may be cheating you...

We need to protect those that are too weak to protect themselves. Usually, it's the CCAs but now it may be the 204-Bs.

If it was me, I would be telling them to jam it and I would be back to carrying my route the next day. I wouldn't allow them

to cheat me out of *my* pay. I take pride in my work and expect to be paid for doing it.

It is going to get really busy and management hasn't hired enough people to keep up with attrition. So PLEASE be smart. Don't do anything stupid. If you are told to do something and it sounds stupid ask someone. Deliver all the mail everyday as assigned. Don't create false records.

This job is worth keeping. In the long run, we all want to retire and our retirements are going to be worth more than a million dollars. Yes. Do the math. Don't throw that away by taking crazy short cuts or doing crazy things.

Article courtesy of the Portland, Oregon NALC Branch 82 November 2018 *B-Mike*

USPS Savings — Just 5 Percent of Projected \$1.6 Billion



by Eric Katz, October 18, 2018

The U.S. Postal Service realized just 5 percent of the savings it projected over a two-year period from a controversial decision to slow mail delivery to enable facility closures, according to a new audit.

Postal management told its regulatory body it would save \$1.6 billion in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 by eliminating overnight delivery of regular, first-class mail and pushing back some of its two-day delivery to a three-day window, but the mailing agency's inspector general found it did not even come close to reaching that estimate. USPS instead saw about \$90 million in savings, about one-twentieth of its estimate.

USPS implemented the service changes as part of its network rationalization plan, which it unveiled in 2011. A precipitous decline in mail volume required the agency to shrink its footprint, postal management said. In the first phase of its changes, the Postal Service shuttered 141 processing facilities. As part of the second phase, which began in 2015, the agency said it would slow its delivery standards and consolidate another 82 plants. As USPS pushed for more comprehensive legislative reform, it never fully implemented the sec-

ond phase of closures, but still fully shuttered 17 facilities and partially consolidated 21 more.

The Postal Service projected the bulk of its savings—about \$1.3 billion—would come from productivity gains in mail processing. USPS later told the IG it only saved \$200 million, but the auditors could not identify any savings at all. In fact, the IG said the Postal Service's mail processing costs have actually increased by \$153 million since the service changes went into place. Mail processing productivity, as measured by pieces of mail processed per hour, dropped by 14 percent since delivery was slowed.

USPS saved just \$15 million from moving employees' shifts from nighttime hours to the daytime, as it could issue less premium pay, but that was \$50 million less than the agency's projection. Additionally, overtime costs grew by \$68.4 million, a 9 percent increase.

Postal management separately estimated it would save \$268 million on transportation costs after implementing its network and delivery changes, but the IG found those expenses actually grew by more than \$1 billion. USPS expected to avoid \$430 million in future costs, but auditors found the agency realized slightly more than half of that total.

The Postal Service said its data was skewed by mail volume continuing to decline as it was implementing the changes, and the IG encouraged the agency to better track the data. Robert Cintron, USPS vice president for network operations, insisted, however, that the IG's findings were off base because the "changing business environment" made isolating the savings from service changes impossible. He added that it would take the Postal Service years to realize the savings it projected. Still, the IG bluntly stated postal managers should not count on ever seeing the cost rollbacks they had expected.

"Management said they remain optimistic they will achieve the full savings," the IG said. "However, we concluded that it is unlikely the Postal Service will ever achieve the projected annual \$805.5 million savings."

The Postal Service's network rationalization plan was met with significant pushback, including bipartisan efforts to block further consolidations. The recently sworn-in chairman of the USPS board of governors has promised to take a fresh look at delivery frequency and standards. A Senate bill with bipartisan backing would call for a third-party evaluation of further processing plant consolidations.

Source: GovExec.com

Article courtesy of the Santa Barbara, California NALC Branch 290 Winter 2018 *Beast of Burden*

Why Do You Think They are Called “Accountables”?

by Ray Hill, President
NALC Branch 2902

I thought we were done with this issue but I still am hearing about offices with no registry Clerks to clear Carriers in the PM.

One thing that really aggravates me is when I hear stories of offices where there are no accountable Clerks available to clear the carriers in the PM and — **INSTEAD OF WAITING AT THE REGISTRY CAGE FOR A CLERK TO CLEAR THEM PROPERLY** — the Carriers simply leave their arrow keys and other accountable items (registered mail, COD Items, cash or checks) sitting somewhere to be “cleared” later when the Clerk finally gets to it.

If an arrow key or a registered item or cash or anything else goes missing and you left the item sitting somewhere without being properly cleared because a clearing Clerk was not available, guess who will be held “accountable” for that item?

**That’s right.
YOU will be held accountable.**

Why do you think they are called “accountable” items? And, why do you think they require your signature when you take possession of them? Because you, **AND YOU ALONE**, are responsible for those items once you take possession of them and sign your name on the dotted line.

Excerpt from an article in the Chatsworth, California NALC Branch 2902 November-December 2018 *MAIL BAG NEWS*

VP-ing

Michelle Decker, Vice President
NALC Branch 791

We continue to have the same complaints over management’s morning process and getting the Carriers estimated leave and return times.

In most offices, the supervisor walks around to each Carrier’s case between 15 and 30 minutes after we start tour. At this time, we do not always know our parcel volumes, SPRS or how many of those are going to need signatures. We also do not have our accountable items yet. At that time, we give the supervisor our best guess on our times.

Later if we find things like several certified letters, we had a 15 minute standup or anything else that would make our original

times given not accurate, we should inform management of our new estimated time. Request a 3996 and state what that reason is and your new estimated times. If you are unable to meet the times you stated in the morning, contact the supervisor, you can use the scanner and message them, let them know that you will be later than expected.

This now pushes management to authorize you for the later delivery or they can instruct you on what they want you to do; like bring the mail back or send some auxiliary help your way. Doing this relieves you, the carrier, of the decision making and forces management--to manage.

Since our start time changes, we have had CCA’s being instructed to bring back mail to avoid late delivery.

WHOLE SECTIONS OF ROUTES...

Section 116.1 of Handbook M-39 reads as follows: Schedule distribution Clerks in a unit with decentralized distribution so that service standards will be met and an even flow of mail will be provided to the carriers each day throughout the year. **Schedule the accountable Clerk to avoid delaying the Carriers’ departures in the morning and for clearance of Carriers on their return to the office** (emphasis added).

Management has a contractual obligation to schedule accountable Clerks to “avoid delaying the Carriers’ departures in the morning and for clearance of Carriers on their return to office”. We should make sure that Management complies with this provision of the Handbook M-39 and when they do not, we must grieve the violations as they occur.

If Management in your office is failing to provide an accountable Clerk to clear the Carriers on their return to the office, please notify your Steward immediately or phone us here at the Union office. I’ve heard horror stories of Carriers being forced to pay for accountable items that were never properly cleared and “went missing.”

Don’t be a fool; be sure that you properly clear all of your accountable items each and every day! If you have to wait for a clearing Clerk, then wait.

I guarantee you that once Management starts paying Carriers at the Overtime or Penalty Overtime rate for waiting in a line for a clearing Clerk to appear, they will start providing one promptly.

If mail is curtailed, a 1571- Report of Undelivered Mail should be properly filled out by the Carrier.

We have had managers fill out 1571’s with false reasons for the delay of mail.

On the 1571 it states “The Following Mail Distributed to Me for Delivery Was Left in the Office or Returned Undelivered.” Filling these out and keeping a copy for yourself could be extremely useful when your route goes through adjustments.

The Delivery Supervisor Manual (M-39) provides/states that a copy will be given to the Carrier if requested. If management does not give you a copy of the 1571 that you requested, please let your Shop Steward know.

Article courtesy of the Everett, Washington
NALC Branch 791 Volume 117
Issue 12 Monthly Report

D.R.T. and resolution of a grievance

P.S. Form 3189 — Temporary Change of Schedule for Personal Convenience

by Joel Tracey, NALC Branch 114 Trustee

What's the D.R.T. you say? Why that'd be the Dispute Resolution Team (D.R.T.), one of the steps at which a grievance may get resolved. Recently Branch 114 received a grievance decision from the Northland District D.R.T. that I'd like to highlight for you.

PS Form 3189, used to request a Temporary Change of Schedule for Personal Convenience, may be used by career carriers to request an earlier begin tour on a particular day. Say you have a family function coming up that you'd like to get to after work, and starting work a half hour early would guarantee that you'd be able to attend. If you fill out the form and get it approved, you get to start early AND are limited to 8 hours of work for that day. This is an accommodation for the carrier in which management has to provide auxiliary assistance for the carrier should they need it to make 8 that day, and thus the decision to grant or deny the request lies with management. In the past, supervisors considered the request and they were commonly granted.

Recently, carriers have been told that lower level supervisors are no longer allowed to grant or deny these requests and that only the Postmaster or Supervisor Chris Whorton can consider them. Why this is we're not really sure, but regardless, a grievance was initiated when a carrier's request was denied by Supervisor Whorton in the beginning of September. The carrier submitted PS Form 3189 and was told that in order to gain approval, the carrier would have to commit to having an 8 hour day without assistance on the requested day. The carrier would/could not make that commitment and as such was given a verbal denial. Management never did fill out their portion of the form.

The DRT decision found "PS FORM 3189 specifically instructs Management to give a reason for their disapproval...The rationale given for the denial was unreasonable. The grievant could not be expected to give an accurate estimate of his workload for the following day without knowing the mail volume and other factors affecting his route." and further instructed "Management cease and desist from denying schedule changes on PS Form 3189 in an arbitrary and capricious manner." This decision was not just the whim of the D.R.T., but was based on contractual rights defined in other precedent setting grievances; including the responsibility that management "may deny change of schedule requests only after considering operational needs specific to the request and weighing them against the needs of the employee making the request. The basis for denial of the request must be specifically stated." The precedent setting grievance just referenced by the D.R.T. team also established that the weighing of operational needs against the employee's needs "should be done in consultation with a union steward whenever practicable."

So where do we go from here? Exercise your rights! If there's a day you would like to start early and be limited to 8 hours, submit a completed PS Form 3189, Request for Temporary Change of Schedule, ahead of time. If not given a response upon submission, ask when you will be given a response. Ask them to furnish you with a copy once they have completed their portion of the form. If denied and no reason is given on the form, ask why you are being denied and request that that reason be included on the form. Regardless of the reason provided for a denial, ask to consult with a steward regarding the denial. Together, you, your steward and your supervisor can ensure your needs are being weighed against operational needs specific to the request. We won a similar grievance in 2011, and we will win future grievances if management doesn't adhere to the D.R.T.'s decision. Let's all work together to make sure they do.

XXXXXXXXXX



from the editor-guy

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

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

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

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

BASIL ZUNIGA

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

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

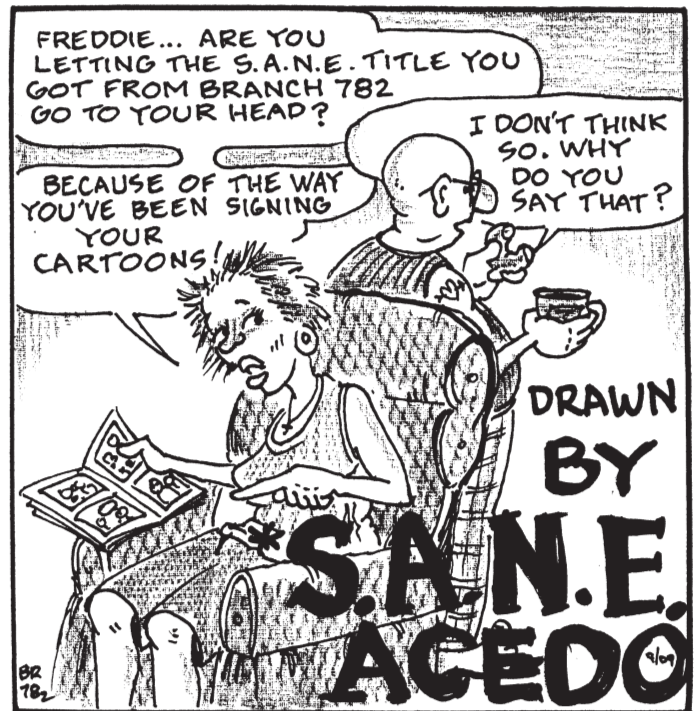
***** SPECIAL OFFER:** I will include a copy of **Out tHeRe** with this order. **500 more cartoons!**

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

Please include \$6.70 for USPS Priority Mail postage.

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

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



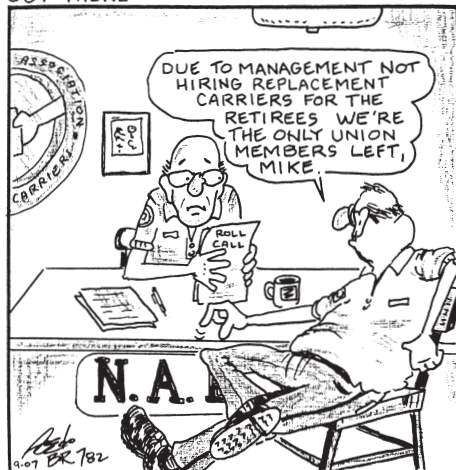
This is a sample. You are looking at page 74 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016 ...

OUT THERE



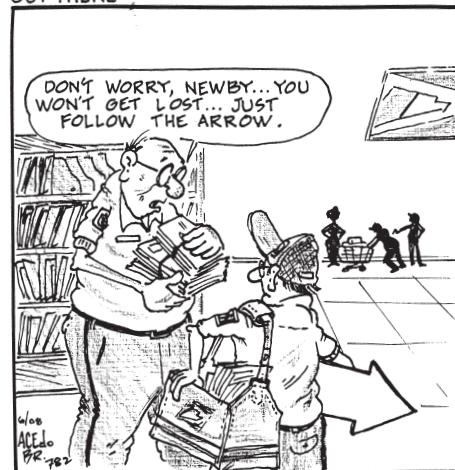
Originally published April 2009

OUT THERE



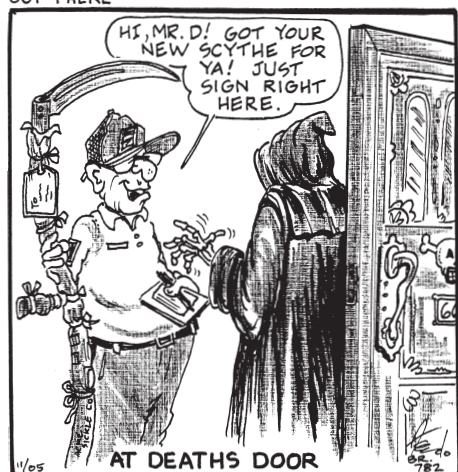
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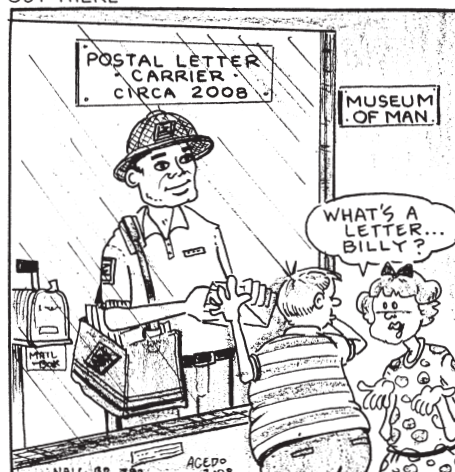
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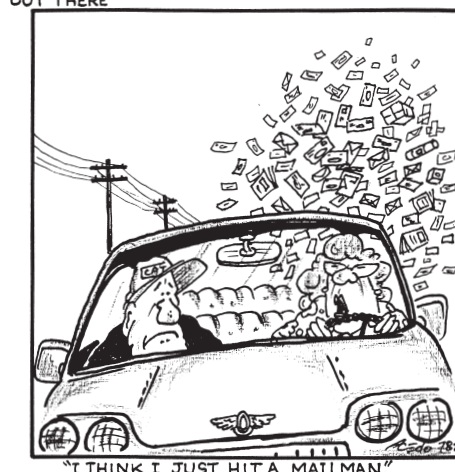
Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

from the editor-guy

Last month, three Branch 782 members sat down with me and watched as I sloppily jotted down answers to a variety of questions about their military service.

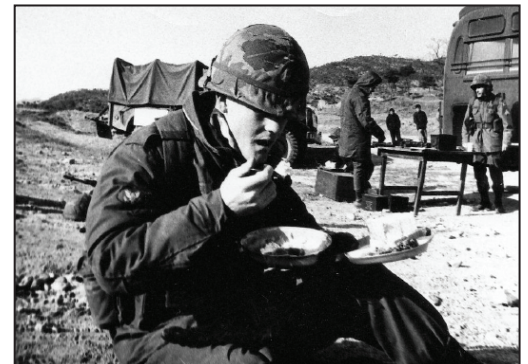
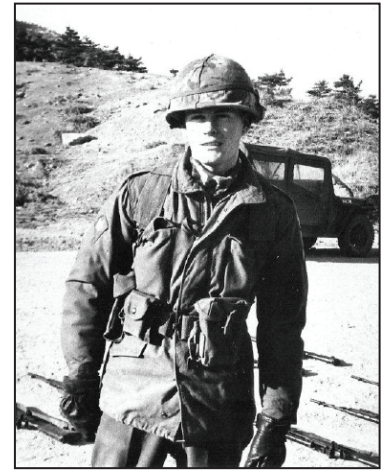
Featuring a number accounts and pictures in last month's publication gave me an opportunity to learn quite a lot about folks I've known for many years. Moreover, I was given the opportunity to see many of their old, faded pictures, slides and scrapbooks. I felt honored that they would take the time to share with us memories and mementos of their own personal history!

I was amazed that some of you actually read that newsletter. While Rick Plummer indicated that he doesn't remember enough about his Army time to be able to answer questions for a future Veterans issue, he did send me a few vintage slices of life which show him captured in the lens. *That* also got me thinking about a few more things...

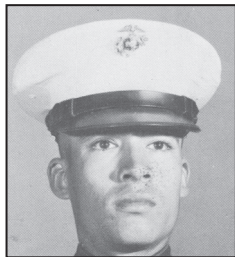
Sometimes, we case next to a person for years. They may have more Letter Carrier seniority than we do. They may have less. We learn a little about them. They may or may not share what they did before they started carrying mail. Sometimes, we can be startled when we see an old unit picture which features them thinner... or that they had hair. It may be hard to even think of some as being young. (But — believe me — the aging process does proceed inexorably, day by day, for each one of us.)



Retiree and Branch 782 Webmaster Rick Plummer may not remember everything, about his days in the U.S. Army, but he thinks that "...they are still probably eating the same old crap even now..."



These pictures courtesy of SPEC4 Plummer, 2nd Infantry Division in the DMZ in Korea.



This process we're on called "Life" doesn't provide any absolute certainty that we are going to be around for any particular length of time. Therefore, I don't know if I am going to get the chance next year to highlight the lives of more Branch 782 members who deserve to be honored for their military service. I truly hope I will...

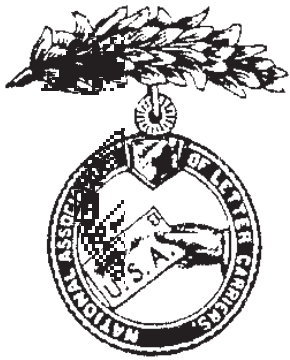
That said, pictures at the bottom of this page came out of the San Diego MCRD Recruit Platoon 209 Graduation Book. They show Retiree Mario Muniz in formation as a United States Marine.



I encourage you to check out the 2017 Veterans Day Special Edition link on the Branch 782 website at <http://782nalc.com/newsletters/2017%20Vets%20Day%20Spec%20Edition/Veterans%20Day%20Special%20Edition%202017.pdf>. (Pages 2 - 5 of that issue present info about Mario who, after boot camp, became a USMC Vietnam War combat veteran and the recipient of three Purple Hearts.)



About two minutes after this picture was taken, Recruit Mario got knocked out.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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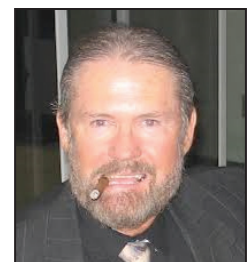
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Stockdale Station (93309)	Maria Valenzuela	(661) 496-5929
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USPS Social Recreation Rep

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**Branch 782
Website
www.782nalc.com**

Rick Plummer, Webmaster





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Non-Profit Organization
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PAID
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General Meeting

Wednesday
December 19, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

PLEASE NOTE: December General Meeting will be on the THIRD Wednesday of the month. There will be a catered meal and we will potluck desserts!

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

This month YOU could win \$500!

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

"OuT tHeRe"



EXECUTIVE BOARD 2018

Holiday Greetings from your E-Board

More info. More pix. More Schtuff!!! Check out the expanded color newsletter at WWW.782.NALC.