

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
DELANO
MOJAVE

AVENAL
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST

TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
LAMONT
SHAFTER

TRONA

BORON
McFARLAND
TAFT

WASCO



VOLUME LXXXI NUMBER 6

JUNE 2009

at the
Mike:



Congratulations to Debbie Anderson and to Mike “Monty” Hall of Bakersfield Post Office and Jim Hill of the Ridgecrest Post Office who are the latest Branch members to join the ranks of the retirees.

It seems only yesterday I was working with Monty and Debbie at the Minner Station (now called the Buck Owens Station). I wish them all the best in their retirement. All of them will be missed.

The local Branch has been busy during the last month. All the routes are being reviewed and Carriers are

receiving their consultations under the Modified Interim Alternate Route Process (MIARAP). The discussions seem to be proceeding smoothly with most of the Carriers realizing that the mail volume has been dropping and that the routes will need to receive route additions. Everyone is anxiously waiting for the outcome of the evaluations and the final adjustments. MIARAP may not be perfect, but still is a better and less stressful way to adjust routes. The true test will be how the final adjustments turn out.

The NRP (National Reassessment Program) interviews have just started in the Bakersfield area. Some Carriers are finding out that they have been working outside their limitations for years and now they are being required to clarify their limitations in order to continue to do the work they have been doing. Even though the process has been fully explained to the Carrier, it has been overwhelming for some of them.

Continued on next page...

Food Drive Final Numbers

Bakersfield—100,683 pounds

AO'S—42,700 pounds

Total: 143,383 pounds!!!

The excessing of clerks into the withheld Carriers positions has also started in the offices covered by the Branch. The Branch has not been receiving any official notification of which positions the clerks are filling until they are scheduled for the Carrier training in Bakersfield. The clerks not only have to deal with the stress of being placed in another office but have to deal with the stress of learning Carrier craft rules and the routes they have been assigned. Management needs to understand this. Give them a reasonable amount of time to learn their new “jobs” and realize that it is going to take a lot longer than just a few weeks for the new Carriers to learn the routes and become proficient. I know all the Carriers will welcome the clerks and help them to adjust to their new positions.

We all know that the Postal Service is dealing with big problems. I would like to share an article by Branch 214 Vice-President Bill Thornton. It provides interesting information and some of his insights.

MIKE TOWERY
NALC Branch 782 President

Waiting for the Earthquake

by Bill Thornton, Vice-President
San Francisco NALC Branch 214

The recent NALC Rap Session included a seminar on the financial outlook of the Postal Service. In a nutshell, it's not good. Mail volume figures have dropped dramatically. Losses mount. The union has conceded that most Carriers do not have 8 hour routes. This is a shocking development but understandable. Expect more concessions. 2nd quarter results with percentage declines in volume of each category of mail: First Class - 8%; Standard Mail - 12%; Periodicals - 3%; Parcels - 10%; Total - 10%.

A Big Hit— First class mail, formerly not seriously affected in economic downturns, has taken a big hit with the continued use of internet electronic mail and the effect on credit card solicitations, etc. as a result of the economic downturn.

Further threatening first class mail volume are Obama initiatives to increase internet use. The majority of Americans have an internet connection or internet-capable cell phone. Many countries in Europe already have broadband connectivity rates greater than 90 percent and are committed to achieving 98 percent by 2012, something President Obama has also sought in his stimulus plan.

The Postal Service's current debt is \$7 billion with a so-called statutory limit of \$15 billion. The USPS is quite likely overstating potential savings in the Minor Route Adjustment Process with ideas of recapturing \$1.3 billion. The union estimates that the savings will be closer to 1/3 of a billion. Meanwhile, current Carrier levels are at 211,000—down from 219,000 in 2003. APWU has lost *half* of its membership since 1989. NALC has lost 40,000 positions.

Even though cuts in Letter Carrier positions continue, cuts are limited by the Universal Service Obligation: The USPS has to deliver to every house 6 days a week. Even if 6 day delivery was eliminated and the many money-losing small post offices

were closed, it is believed that this would not make a serious enough dent to raise the Postal Service out of catastrophic circumstances. But the major question may be, “Is the Postal Service selling a product that fewer people want?” Critics argue that the USPS has bloated payrolls and a huge fixed-cost infrastructure, including 38,000 buildings.

The 2006 Postal Service Accountability Act mandated the USPS to “...start acting like a business and to earn a profit.”

The USPS was supposed to do this by becoming more competitive in the services for which it did not enjoy a legal monopoly, like sending packages or express mail services. Also, by using its legal monopoly to better effect, and finally by developing new services and hence new revenue streams.

The 2006 Act also enhanced the power and changed the name of the Postal Rate Commission to the Postal Regulatory Commission. Postmaster Jack Potter continues to rely on the Federal Funds Bank loans to make up for the USPS's losses. The line of credit allows the USPS to borrow, as noted, up to \$3 billion per year, up to a maximum of \$15 billion for shortfalls without requiring extraordinary allocations or annual legislation to be approved by Congress. As of September 2008, the account was already drawn down to \$7.2 billion.

“
...After the recession, will
volume return to “normal”?”

Current Crisis—In reference to the current situation, Postal Service management underestimated the worst case scenario. They had projected a 4% mail drop in 2009. Instead, volume dropped 9 - 19%, possibly understandable given the historic economic decline. “The Perfect Storm.”

But, possibly, at the core of difficulties is the assumption that increases in volume of standard mail would go on forever. After

the recession, will volume return to “normal”? Or is it a declining business? Is the business producing a product that nobody wants anymore? Is the business model of the Postal Service broken?

Supposedly because of efficiencies produced by bulk mail, machinable, zip-plus-four and zip-plus-nine standardization schemes we were to have weathered the storm.

Part of the solution—Driven by internet cannibalization and especially the economic downturn, we can argue where the cuts should come. The Union traditionally points out the necessity for management cuts. I see some, locally, that cry out for cuts. Whether USPS will get rid of Carrier supervisors is an open question. From the Union’s perspective, this cries out for change.

Unfortunately, given Postal Service inclination to cut costs rather than grow the business, it is possible management may choose to continue the short-term fix of harassing Carriers to get small incremental savings that make some local poobah look good. This would be very short sighted.

Privatization?—In Europe, the trend is totally to privatization. And this is within countries that operate almost all according to Social Democratic principles with social safety nets that are the envy of the world.

If a “bailout” is necessary, the NALC has a natural ally in the Obama administration. But, as recent developments in

the auto industry indicate, ultimately any Obama assistance is unlikely to come without some concessions.

As many issues are resolved surrounding health care funding and pension fund issues (which have been a drag on the financial health of the Postal Service), the issue of whether or not there is a sound business model in place to survive will be called into question.

Is the monopoly part of the Postal Service business really worth anything anymore?

Recently, as reported in the *Federal Times*, the Postal Service is offering volume discounts to attract business customers to parcel and overnight business. That the Postal Service has only about 10% of the parcel business is pretty shocking in that the Post Office once had virtually all the parcel business. The 10% figure may be a little distorted in that some of the parcel business is related to parcels for industries outside of the Postal Service’s size parameters.

The USPS and jobs and also threatened by environmental concerns resulting in the “Do not Mail” initiatives. The Union can fight these initiatives, but the concerns raised will have to be addressed.

As somebody said: “We’re out of money, it’s time to think.”

Article courtesy of the May-June 2009 *Voice* of San Francisco, CA Branch 214

Paul and Monte, It was a Party!!



Minutes of the May 2009 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:30 p.m. on the 26th day of May, 2009 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, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South Station, Stockdale and Wasco. Also present was the OWCP Rep. Richard Gerdes; Assistant Editor Jason Munoz; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet; Emma Gonzales of the Social and Recreation Committee and Danny Blair of the Labor Management Safety and Health Committee. The Minutes of the April 28, 2009 meeting were accepted as read with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Sandra Rivera and Frances Garcia.

REPORTS OR STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega suggested the dates of September 13th or 20th as possible dates for the picnic. Emma Gonzales reported that the Social and Recreation Committee will be having a Holiday Dinner Dance. They also will be having a Golf Tournament, Softball Tournament, Volleyball Tournament and more discount movie tickets.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: A motion was made at the April meeting by Molly Biggar, that the Branch donate \$300.00 to help with the cost of the Food Drive BBQ. The motion was seconded by Jerry Patterson. A discussion was held, a vote was taken and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS: Molly Biggar presented the 2009 - 2010 Budget. A vote to accept the budget will be taken at the June meeting. Darryl Holderman presented the By-Laws changes. Article V, Section 1: the committee recommended approval. The membership voted to accept the recommendation of the committee. Article V Section 8: the committee recommended approval. The membership voted to accept the committee recommendation. Article III Section 1, the committee recommended approval. The membership voted to accept the recommendation of the committee.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Bill Curtis asked the members to clean up after themselves and their children after the meetings. There will be a Steward Training in Fresno on June 7th. Contact Kim if you want to attend. Those members who attended the training session in Los Angeles reported: Mable Bullis said she enjoyed the training classes, she

learned a lot and where to find things. Emma Gonzales reported that the training was very good, very informative, she wished more people would attend. Norma Hamer reported that it is was very informative. John Ortega - Ditto, the Joint Statement class was very informative. Brad Smith asked for clarification regarding senior Carrier's routes being eliminated during the route adjustment. Mike Towery said that all assignments junior to the senior Carrier who lost his/her route would be placed up for bid. Only Carriers within that zip code can bid on the posted routes. Currently there are nineteen positions being withheld in the branch. Hermie Encinas thanked Norma for the newsletter article regarding Shafter. Webmaster Rick Plummer has set up a program to upload photos. Contact him if you want to send him anything. Jacqueline Brown, South Station, has set up a blog: NALC782.blogspot.com.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$13,506.96 was collected for the month of May.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported;

Beginning Balance	\$60,181.95
Dues and Income	\$12,787.72
Interest Income	\$ 16.55
Total Balance	\$72,986.22
Total Expenses	\$10,386.82
Ending Balance	\$62,599.40

Mabel Bullis shared with the members that Brundage had a car wash after the Food Drive and the Manager and Supervisors washed some of the Carriers' cars.

The 50/50 MDA Drawing was won by Mabel Bullis.

The Drawing for \$500.00 was won by Debbie Guillet who *WAS* present and was very excited to win.

There were 39 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES
Branch 782 Recording Secretary

**June 2009 General Membership
Meeting Drawing**

\$50

*There is one "catch"...
You have to be present to win.*

We've Launched <http://branch782.blogspot.com/> *"The Post Script"*



Month after month Basil Zuniga (aka The Editor Guy) puts together a union newsletter. It's not an easy task. Many other union branches put out their own newsletters. Overall, Basil does a great job of making the newsletter both informative and entertaining.

website that would house all additional information he wasn't able to get in.

With that in mind, *The Post Script* was created! *The Post Script* is meant as a supplement to the *Branch 782 E.A Baker Union Update*. The purpose of this blog is to inform carriers of news and information that concern them both locally and on a national scale.

The Postal Service is going through radical changes. Being informed about those changes can help Carriers be prepared for the effect they may have to their jobs. Being informed about how other Carriers, both locally and nationally, feel about those changes is also important.

In talking to Basil about what he does each month to get the newsletter out, he mentioned that there were many things he wished he could put in. Yet, due to deadlines or space available in the newsletter, he wasn't able to add certain information that he would like. He mentioned he was interested in creating a

Feel free to comment on any posts or submit an article of your own. Help managing the site is also welcome.

JACQUELYN BROWN
 Bakersfield South Station

DOWNTOWN STATION

Dale Pearce
 Javier Cruz

SOUTH STATION

100% Union!!!

EAST BAKERSFIELD

100% Union!!!

HILLCREST

M. M. Henry

BRUNDAGE

David Kinglee

DOLE COURT

Alice Schultz

STOCKDALE

Ron Huston
 G.S. Saran

NON-MEMBER LIST February 2009

CAMINO MEDIA

F. Medina, Jr.

ARVIN

100% Union!!!

AVENAL

J. T. Howery

BORON

100% Union!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY

100% Union!!!

DELANO

C. V. Quebral

EDWARDS

100% Union!!!

LAMONT

100% Union!!!

McFARLAND

100% Union!!!

MOJAVE

100% Union!!!

RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce
 H. G. Blanco
 A. M. Connell
 T. K. Miller
 R. M. Nokes

SHAFTER

L. M. New
 M. D. Voights

TAFT

B. W. Krier
 K. J. Hughes

TEHACHAPI

V. L. Johnson

TRONA

S. L. Walent
 B. R. Dame
 K. K. Treat

WASCO

100% Union!!!

94% of all Letter Carriers in our cities are NALC members (429 out of 456)!!!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE LETTERS GONE??

I am sure we have all noticed the drop in mail volume. Because of the drop in mail volume the times of the postal service are changing, and because they are changing we as a union will be faced with some new challenges like the the National Reassessment Process (NRP) and its most recent version called the Limited Duty Pilot. The USPS is attempting to cut costs as fast as the mail volume drops. The NALC has stepped up by agreeing to the Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process (MIARAP).

This agreement allows us to go before Congress and show how much we pitched in to help cut costs at a terrible time in our history. It also allows us to demand the same efforts from the Postmaster General about downsizing the number of managers that are in the Postal Service.

Millions of people are out of work and would love to have our jobs. The way we are going to keep what we have is by having a Congress that will work for us. Anything or everything could be gone with a stroke of a pen! You probably don't know that one sentence was put into the budget saying that postal employees were going to have to pay the same rate of our health insurance as other federal employees. This would have cost us about a \$1000 dollars more a year. Bill Young, your National President, put a call in to President Obama. In three days, Vice-President Biden called and said the language was removed. It is good we have these friends in Washington D.C.

How are we going to protect our jobs and retirement benefits? We need *each and every* Letter Carrier to sign up for COLCPE!!! It's easy to do.

All your President is asking you to do is to give through Automatic Electronic Deduction at least \$5 per pay period deducted right from your pay check as an allotment. ***IT IS JOB INSURANCE!*** Right now we have a Congress that is working for us. That could all change in the next election. We work hard for what we have and we need to keep it. You can go to the NALC web site and sign up yourself or I can sign you up. If have any questions on how to do this or any questions on what COLCPE does feel free to call me at 661-979-5854.



Branch 782 members proudly pose for a picture with NALC National President Bill Young.

On a lighter note I would like to thank all the carriers who picked up food on Food Drive day. I would also like to thank David Rener, Dan Lujan, and Frank Martinez who joined Allen Smith and myself in front of the Green Frog Market the Thursday evening before the drive. Last but not least I would like to thank Allen Smith the Hillcrest Food Drive Coordinator for the great job he did. THANK YOU.

PAM SMITH
Hillcrest Shop Steward
Branch 782 Legislative Liaison



(l-r) John Ortega, Diana Chavez, Pam Smith, Norma Hamer, Mabel Bullis and Emma Gonzalez at the recent CSALC Training session.

OBOMITES infest Washington

We're in much, much deeper trouble than any of us could ever have imagined before the OBOMITES infested Washington, D.C. Now, instead of contacting your Congressmen or Senators you'd better get a hold of our National Pres, Bill Young before he wrecks our Health Benefits and facilitates over a \$1000.00 tax increase to Letter Carriers' Federal tax burden. On page 11 of May, 2009 issue (Postal Record) he says that "Generally, we're against the idea of any tax on our health benefits"??? GENERALLY? REALLY? What the hell, let's just jack up the tax load on the Letter Carriers! Then he tells us that if Obama can show us lower premiums that "we'd want to take a closer look"??? At what? Usually, lower premiums mean lower quality or you're FORCING people into a "one-size-fits-all" plan that eliminates choice. I thought the Democrats were all about "choice". (As long you choose their way).

Then he talks about "Raising the standard" of expense and spotty service plaguing the private American health care system"? Really? First of all, America has the best health care system in the world! PERIOD! He and the Democrats want to follow Canada, Cuba, Europe and any other socialistic country's government run system. When was the last time you ever heard of anyone running to one of these places for better health care? And isn't Obama doing just a fine job of running the country into the ground already? Billions in bailouts have literally disappeared to "save" banks, insurance companies, real estate, foreign institutions, auto manufacturers (Chrysler & GM) and bigger, uglier government! I can't wait to see how Obama "saves" our horrible American health care system!

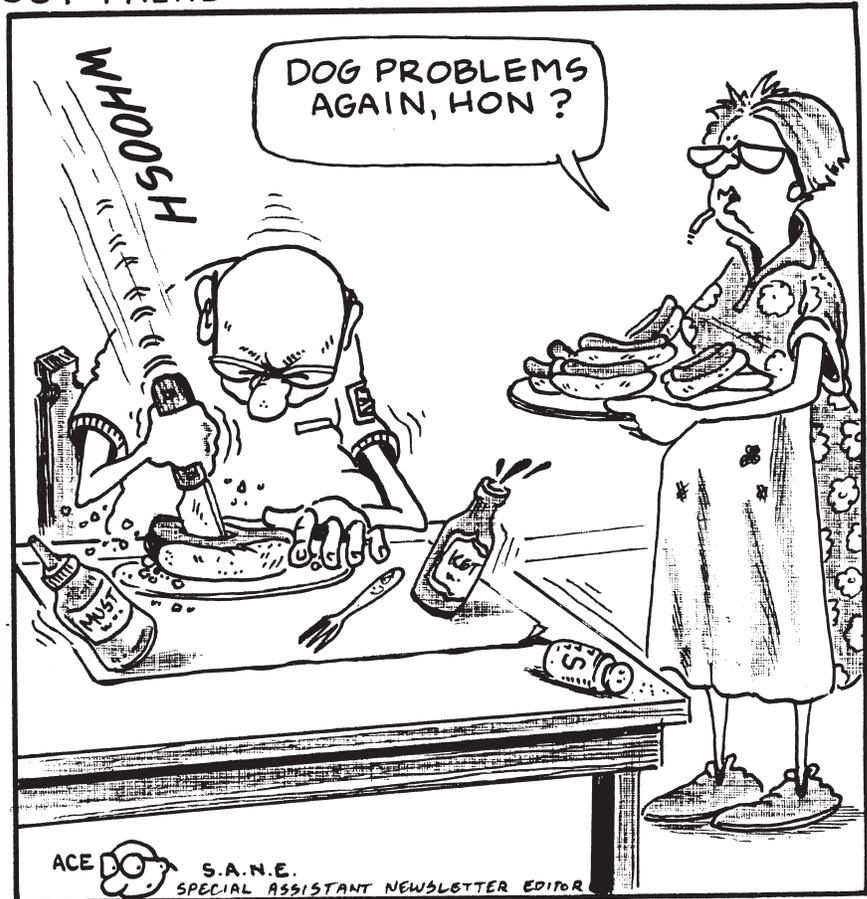
Finally, he says, "We want people to tell Congress, 'I want good health care like my letter carrier.'" Sobecome a Letter Carrier and work for it! This is the most juvenile behavior I've ever seen in any leader of any organization ever! Jeez, I'd like to have free health care and the best doctors and the best hospitals and the best prescriptions. Letter Carriers WORK for what we have. Do we have the same coverage as our Congressmen or Senators or the President has? What's being proposed here is UTOPIA. Utopia is nowhere; it doesn't exist. The government cannot provide everything to everyone nor should it. What if they printed up one Million Dollars for everyone in America? It would make your money worthless! Most people in America work for what they have. Whenever government decides to give away anything (like \$\$, houses, food, clothing, health care, etc.) it comes out of your pocket!

Responsible people, like Letter Carriers, work for what they are paid, including employer financed health care. We also earn our vacations, sick leave, holidays, retirement and pay extra into our TSP retirement accounts. We pay federal, state and local taxes. We help people in need (Food Drive & CFC & numerous charitable events). When this current government comes along and decides to just give away all of the things that we must work for, it's a slap in the face for our efforts to being responsible. We need to tell our Union leaders to represent us. Isn't that why we pay dues out of the money that we work to earn?

BILL CURTIS

retired and trying to hold on before they take it all away.....

OUT THERE



The key is working together!

It was great to see how everyone worked together for the Food Drive. Seeing that led me to think about the Holiday which followed soon after that event: Memorial Day.

This day should be special for everyone. Those who were in the armed forces fought for—and in many cases gave their lives for our freedoms. I know that many people we work side by side with were in the Service. I hope that they were thanked for all that they did. Whether they were in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, or other places around the world, *all* veterans were part of the effort to preserve our way of life. Young men in their teens and twenties have been at Pearl Harbor, Saigon or the desert of Iraq doing their duty.

During and after our involvement in Vietnam, too many of those who returned never received a proper hero's welcome. Desert Storm seemed to be over so quickly, that people didn't realize there would be sacrifice. We now know better... Many young men and women have been to Iraq and to Afghanistan, continue to rotate back, and some never, ever come home.

Too many of those who do come home find that the reward for their sacrifice is bitter. Good jobs are hard to come by; some bring back emotional scars which make it hard to really come home; and they feel alone in dealing with all that they have been through.

We need to remember to say "Thank You!" to all of our veterans....not only on Memorial Day or Veterans Day, but on every day of the year!

As I write this, I have to stop and think about those of us who have become Postal "veterans". Through the years, we survive much of what the USPS has dreamed up to take much of the enjoyment out of what we do. In the past few months, I hear things that supervisors, managers and postmasters are doing. With the mail volume dropping, people are having to pivot almost every day.

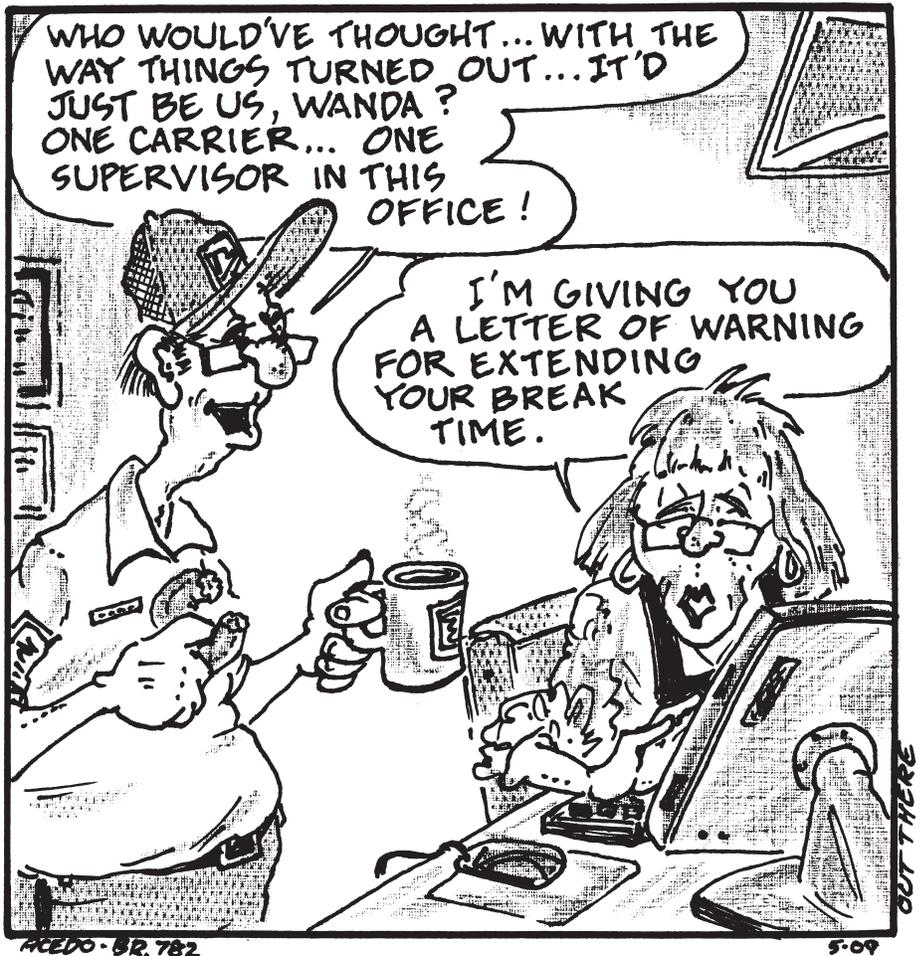
I'm all for working eight hours for eight hours of pay. I understand that we have to do our part to help the USPS survive. I get it. In most cases, I think that the majority of Letter Carriers do. We do our part. And, yet, in this day when craft and management should be working together to keep the mail flowing, it seems that management is doing their best to issue removals or come up with programs to get rid of the workers.

Why does management seem to go out of their way to cause tension and aggravation? If you want some time off to do something and put in for it the time a month in advance, you would think that management could work it out. No. They wait until the week that you need off comes up. Then, they tell you that you can't have it off. But, when they have too many people off, they come to you and ask for help to ease and carry so you can help them...

My point is that if we can't work together, within the next few years none of us might have a post office or place to work. This is the time to dig deep down and give an honest effort to make the Postal Service an organization which really is geared to giving the best possible service to all of our customers. If it requires overtime to get the mail delivered, then it requires overtime. Why—when grievances can cost the USPS so much money—does management violate the contract?

I know that smaller offices can have a much greater advantage than larger offices when it comes to being able to work together. But it *can* work anywhere: **the key is working together!**

JERRY PATTERSON
Delano Shop Steward



From Way Out in Brundage...

Station Manager Mike Bettes, along with our supervisors — Crystal Southwood and Carrie Kendrick—has been great in establishing that not only can we continue doing our job together but we can mutually team up to help our community in need.

Ever since I've been stationed at Brundage, I am so overwhelmed at times knowing that my station gives it all they have to help when there is a need, whether it's for the community or for our fellow co-workers.

Thank you to Management and to Brundage Station for making another Food Drive worthwhile.

Here are some pictures of everyone having a great time. It was such an awesome sight to see, more than I could have imagined.



Biggest Loser 1st Month Winner

Not everyone weighed in, but here is the winner for our first month..... da da da dum...

Laura Gordon
from Dole Court!



Congratulations, Laura, on surpassing everyone with a huge loss of 6.94%!

MABEL BULLIS
Brundage Station Shop Steward



“Huerra”*

**Spanish pronunciation: “Wehrrah”...Spanish translation: light complected woman (i.e. “white girl”)*

How do you describe “Huerra”?? Yes, “Huerra”!! She’s had this name since I can remember. She is “bleach white” and she has a Boston accent. Instead of saying “car”, you hear “caa”... almost like a parrot.

This woman is kind, giving of herself, proud of her accent, and madly in love with a great guy named Rick. Some husband and wife teams seem to struggle when working together. This couple never did.

“Huerra”, the way I see it, is a rock of compassion, intellect (Did I say that? Yes, I did!) and professionalism.



Branch 782 President Mike Towery and Bakersfield Postmaster Jim Brouilliard present commendation to Debbie Anderson at her retirement ceremony.

Not one customer on Route 101 is going to accept anyone less. They know that it’s going to take a great person to take her place. She is selfless with all of her business customers. They always feed her but she never gained a pound! I don’t know if it’s because of the “sticks” she puts in her mouth or if it’s from me running her ragged!

However, I do know one thing: This woman makes me proud to be a female working for the Postal Service. Women, sometimes, tend to get a bad rap in the world of business, but *this* gal will take any man down!



“Huerra” is the “FIRST”, yes, I mean “First!”, woman to retire in Bakersfield with thirty years! What a hell of an accomplishment! “Huerra”, no one can take that from you!

There are so many things about you that I wish that I could tell about you, but Sarah won’t let me!

Seriously, who would have known that you have donated **SIXTEEN GALLONS** of blood to Houchin Blood Bank! You asked me if you could go give blood during your lunch, I had no idea!



A Houchin Blood Bank representative commemorates Debbie Anderson’s donation of 16 gallons with a special award.



You are a HERO as far as I can see. I know that everyone in the Postal Service would agree!

You leave with pretty big shoes to fill! Those of you women or men who would like someone to follow your career path behind someone with a great work ethic and a solid customer service background, follow and learn from the one and only “Huerra”—Debra Anderson.



Debbie, using her cell phone to inform the customer inside the house that she is here to make the package pickup.

a certificate acknowledging her contribution to the blood bank. Over the years she has donated SIXTEEN gallons of blood. This represents over 300 people whose lives she has touched in a very personal way.

The potluck was bittersweet. Everyone was so happy that she was getting to retire; but, she will be missed. She has been part of the Downtown Family for years. When she bid route 101 she brought that crazy sense of humor and that wonderful Boston accent to the station and it was never the same again. I will miss her smile and greeting when I come into the office. I have to admit that I am envious and a little jealous.

Best of Luck!!!! Enjoy! And get Rick busy on all those “Honey Do’s”

KIM GERDES “former Downtown Carrier.”

Carriers, just remember that it’s not about anyone but your customers! When they are happy, everyone is happy! That is one of the best rewards a person can take with them when they retire! “Huerra’s” theory was dead on! “Huerra”, Downtown will *never* be the same without you! We are going to miss the hell out of you!!

TERESA ESPINOZA
Bakersfield Downtown
Station Manager

“I remember once we were taking a donation for someone. Debbie reached into *my* front pocket and donated \$1.57 to the cause in my name...” - RALPH MOELLER

“I have known Debbie Anderson for about twenty years. She is one great lady. Of all the employees at the downtown station, she is my favorite - “Chuck”.

She has told me her favorite things to do are fishing and carrying mail—but not at the same time. I will miss her much as she was my favorite smoking buddy. We were chastised about our smoking habit by Manager Teresa Espinoza all in good humor. I will miss her much and hope she enjoys her retirement, especially fishing.” - CHRIS MacLAUGHLIN

I was fortunate to be able to attend the “Potluck” for Debbie Anderson’s retirement. A representative from the Houchin Blood Bank attended the potluck. She presented Debbie with



Debbie, We’ll All Miss You!!!

2009 NALC HBP Info

NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
*** Mental & Substance Precert.	1-877-468-1016
Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Hearing Impaired	1-800-238-1217
*** CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
*** Durable Medical Eqpt.	1-888-636-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
Nurse Assistant (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
***CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quest Diagnostics (Lab Services)	1-877-220-6252
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-784-8797
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
**** Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213

* Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by the Plan. Must notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates. ** Mail order drug prescription program long term (maintenance drugs) 60 day supply: \$8 generic, \$24 name brand; 90 day supply: \$12 generic, \$35 name brand. Retail Pharmacy, you pay 25% . MEDICARE 60 day supply: \$7 generic, \$20 name brand; 90 day supply: \$10 generic, \$30 name brand. Network Retail Pharmacy you pay 15% of the cost of the prescription. Prior approval required for some drugs. Must call the Plan. *** **Prior Approval Required.** **** Asthma and Diabetis.



**Branch 782
Health Benefit
Representative**



**Mark
Ramirez**
(661) 834-5011

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

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

**NALC Drug Prescription Program
"Claims"
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Phoenix, AZ 85012-2192**

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

**Preferred Provider (PPO)
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Co-pay per office visit**

**Preferred Provider (PPO)
Deductible
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\$500 Self & Family
Per Calendar Year**

Contact Information

Center for Disease Control	http://www.cdc.gov
National Library of Medicine	http://www.nlm.nih.gov
American Public Health Assoc.	http://www.alpha.org
American Cancer Society	http://www.cancer.org
American Heart Association	http://www.americanheart.org
American Lung Association	http://www.lunusa.org
Diabetes Foundation	http://www.diabetis.org
Muscular Dystrophy Association	http://www.mdausa.org
JAMA Asthma Information Center	http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma
Your Personal Health Record	http://www.nalc.org/depart/hbp
National Patient Safety	http://www.npsf.org

What to do in case of active carrier's death

1. Notify employee's immediate supervisor.
2. Notify postmaster.
3. Notify personnel section (if any).
4. Contact the following for accounts or benefits:
 - a. The local NALC union office;
 - b. If veteran, the veterans' Administration local office;
 - c. Local bank or postal credit union;
 - d. Social Security Administration local office;
 - e. Insurance companies for policies on life (if NALC Mutual Benefit Association, write 100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318; if Federal Employees Group Life Insurance, contact local personnel office): hospitalization (if NALC Health Benefit Plan, write 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 22093 or call 703-729-4677); house; and automobile;
 - f. Internal Revenue Service local office;
 - g. U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Employee Service and Records Center, Boyers, PA 16017 or the NALC retirement office, 100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144. You can phone the NALC retirement office toll-free at 800-424-5186 on Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday. 10 a.m.-12 noon and 2-4 p.m. (Eastern time).
5. Change name on all important papers to survivor's name.
6. Notify station superintendent (or supervisor) or postmaster of the time and place of memorial services.
7. Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs. They can advise how many.
8. Give immediate supervisor locker keys and badge.
9. Fill out these forms (available in some post offices from personnel section or postmaster): SF 2800—application for death benefit; SF 1153—claim of designated beneficiary for unpaid compensation; SF 1155—claim for unpaid compensation, no designated beneficiary; FE 6—claim for benefits, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance.
10. Check with USFS personnel section or postmaster for annuity for yourself and any minor children.
11. If previous marriage, have divorce papers. If present marriage, have marriage license.
12. Contact the station's personnel office about your potential eligibility for Annuity Protection Plan payments.

What to do in case of retired carrier's death

1. Notify Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Retirement Programs, Employee Service and Records Center, Boyers, PA 16017. In your letter include: full name of deceased; exact date of birth; exact date of death; CSA claim number, address, relationship and signature of person entitled to survivor benefits.
2. For quicker action, notify NALC's Director of Retired Members, 100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144, or call toll-free 800-424-5186 Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday. 10 am.-noon and 2-4 p.m. (Eastern time). NALC will alert OPM so that survivor benefits will commence as quickly as possible, and will send you Forms SF 2800—application for death benefit, survivor annuity and FE 6—claim for benefits, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance. Remember that survivor annuities are not paid automatically. You must apply to OPM to receive benefits.
3. Return any uncashed 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 any future checks be returned to the Treasury Department.
4. Contact the following for accounts or benefits:
 - a. The local NALC union office;
 - b. If veteran, the Veterans' Administration local office and the commanding officer of local military installation;
 - c. Local bank or other financial institutions;
 - d. Social Security Administration local office;
 - e. Insurance companies for policies on life (if NALC Mutual Benefit Association, write 100 Indiana Ave., N.W. Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318); hospitalization (if NALC Health Benefit Plan, write 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 22093 or call 703-729-4677); house; and automobile;
 - f. Internal Revenue Service local office.
5. Change name on all important papers to survivor's name.
6. Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs. They can advise how many.
7. Gather miscellaneous necessary papers such as birth certificate, marriage license, divorce decree, death certificates of deceased children or spouses or other documents establishing identity of relationship of survivor.

NOTE: If spouse of retired carrier dies, call NALC retirement office to obtain the forms to: restore annuity to full amount switch health coverage from family to self (unless dependent children); change beneficiary of government life insurance.

KEEP THIS PAGE WITH YOUR IMPORTANT PAPERS

from the editor-guy

As I've gotten older, I find that my memory isn't as good as it used to be. Some of you may have an inkling of what this means.

If you don't, you will. In time, you may not remember that I wrote this...

The reason that I say this is because I want to share an observation with you. It is not originally mine. In fact, it may not even have originated with the author whose name I can't recall.

This insight was in an article that I read in one of the many, many, many NALC newsletters that I read each month. Unfortunately, I can't remember who to credit.

If, perchance, you read this and *you* are the person who wrote that article, I want you to know that I really did ponder and think about what you wrote. *That* is the biggest compliment, eh?

Be that as it may, I really want everyone else who may actually read this article to think about the notion that I'm sharing....

If you were to interview the majority of people in the United States to ask them about their mail delivery, chances are that a small percentage of folks would know the name of the Postmaster of the city where they live. (Of course, small town Postmasters might be an exception to this.)

By the same token, almost no one would know the name of any of the people (clerks/mailhandlers/truck drivers/supervisors/managers/custodians/secretaries/planners) who actually handled, processed, transported or "managed" the mail that they receive at their home.

Ask them to name the Postmaster General. Ask them to name any of the folks who work at 20260 (the USPS headquarters zip code) and they probably won't know.*

But....ask them if they know their Letter Carrier.

Many would have personal stories about when their dogs chased the mailman; or when a letter was delivered to their house which had only the most minimal identifying info (e.g. "Lady on Real Road in the pink house"); and, they would all have something (complimentary or not) to say about "*their*" Letter Carrier when they were kids or even today. They *do* know **us**!

Years ago, I was in uniform after work at Montgomery Wards. A little girl was lost and she was crying because she wanted her family. She stopped crying when she saw me. She didn't know me, but she obviously knew her Letter Carrier. She reached for my hand and we waited until the frantic mother came to find her toddler. *That's* the kind of connection we have.

Bill Marchand was my T-6 for over twenty-three years on my first route. He was T-6 for many more years than that. I was only on the route for 23 of them. As I recall, Bill retired with about 43 years of service. Recently, he sent a picture to me care of his Carrier (Ralph Ramirez, South Station's Route 427). The picture shows the aftermath of a dog bite which occurred when he was on Route 427 (my old route). The bite by a German Shepherd required six stitches.



I know that management tends to view Letter Carriers as expendable. As I used to tell new employees, "The day after they hire you, they're going to try to look for a way to fire you." Think about that one.

As evidenced by Bill's injury, Letter Carriers literally invest their own blood, sweat and even tears on a daily basis, for years, as we deliver mail to each and every neighborhood in this great country of ours six days a week.

You've heard that Management would like to go to a five-day delivery week to cut costs. Well, think about this. What are the costs? **We** are.

In 1989, there were 243,000 City Letter Carriers. In 2009, there are 211,000. In 1989, there were 301,000 clerks and there are now 188,000. I haven't seen the figures on management, but look around. You do the math. Where do *they* want to cut costs???

Five day delivery...what happens to the T-6? There are 16.7% less PTFs in March 2009 than the last SPLY comparison period. Why? Because management feels they have to cut costs: Us.

We **are** an asset to the Postal Service. Frank Thomasy, former President of Branch 782, used to end his "Frankly Speaking" articles with this comment: ***Be Consistent! Be Safe! Be Professional! Be Proud!***

It makes as much sense now as it did then...

BASIL ZUNIGA

(*I don't know if this would be interesting to you or not. This info has been in a lot of other newsletters so this is not something new: Go to "http://php.courierpostonline.com/data_public/datauniversal/usps/" to check out how much money USPS employees earn. You can type in the zip code where you work. It shows base pay for everybody there. More interesting is to type in the 20260 zip code. See for yourself how many headquarters people there are. Take a look at the costs involved in all these folks who don't move any mail and who are working hard to eliminate costs...us.)



Branch Officers

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 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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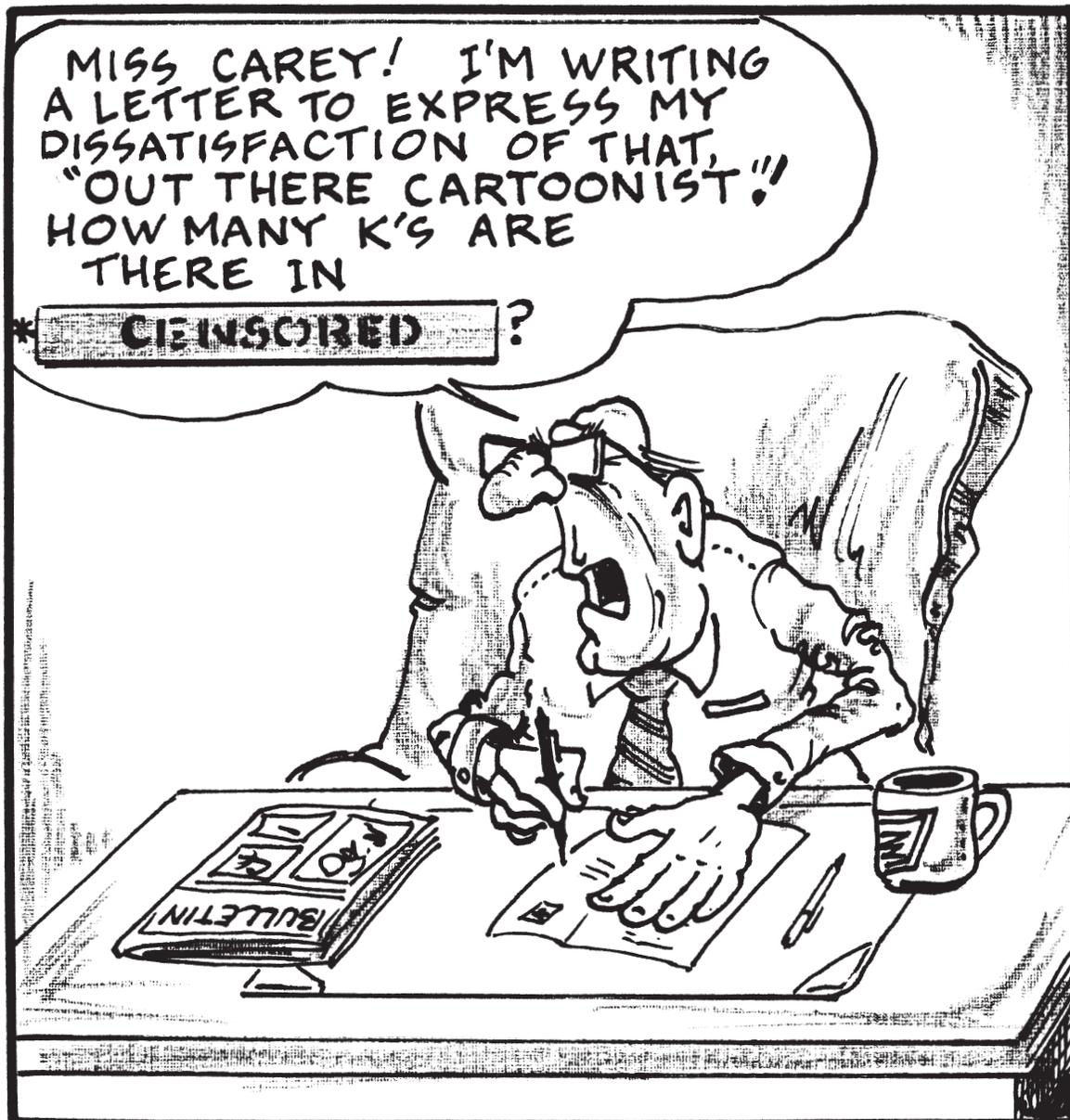
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General Meeting
Tuesday
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7:30 p.m.

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*** EDITORS NOTE:** *The actual omitted word is "muckraker"*