

# National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 782 E.A. Baker Union Update



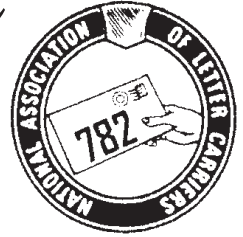
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**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901**



NUMBER 1

WEB VERSION

JANUARY 2020

## Be advised: 2020 - 2023 NALC Branch 782 Officers to be officially installed at our regularly scheduled General Meeting by NALC National Officer Dan Toth on January 22, 2020

The son of a Letter Carrier, Dan Toth was elected Director of Retired Members in 2018. Previous to that, he was elected the Cincinnati Region 11 National Business Agent (NBA) by acclamation in 2014 during the 69th Biennial NALC Convention in Philadelphia. NALC President William H. Young had initially appointed Toth to that post in May 2009 to fill a vacancy.

Toth first became active in the defense of Letter Carriers when he took a Shop Steward position with Lorain, Ohio NALC Branch 583 in 1984, *and he has been working on behalf of his Brother and Sister Letter Carriers ever since!*

“As a second-generation Letter Carrier, I remember how hard my father worked to make ends meet,” Toth said. “During the late 1960s and into the 1970s, Letter Carriers – like my father – had to work numerous jobs to provide a solid middle-class quality of life. I decided from the onset of my career that I was going to make a difference in protecting and improving the wages and benefits that the NALC and its members fought to gain!”

“From Day 1, I was never intimidated by management,” he said. “Routinely, I went toe-to-toe protecting the rights of Letter Carriers from overzealous managers.” Toth served Branch 583 as a local Business Agent and arbitration advocate, Trustee and Vice President, eventually rising to become Branch President. He also served as Director of Education for the Ohio State Association of Letter Carriers. In May 2005, President Young named Toth a Regional Administrative Assistant (RAA) for Region 11, which serves the Letter Carriers of Ohio and upstate New York.

“I was able to rise to the position of National Business Agent because the NALC dedicated resources to train me along with mentors who took the time to provide support and knowledge to help me represent the members to the best of my ability,” Toth said. **“I recognize how important that was to me during my growth and I want to pay that forward!”**

Toth also serves on the Eastern Area Safety Task Force, the Northern Ohio Communications Task Force, and he is a member of the Northern Ohio Employee Assistance Program (EAP) team.

“Other than providing the best representation possible, one of my main goals as the Region 11 NBA is to train and assist in developing our next generation of NALC leaders,” he said. “I believe this is a responsibility that we should all strive to engage in. Ultimately, I would like to see Letter Carriers continue to have a good wage-and-benefit package,” he added, “a work environment free of bullying and harassment and a fulfilling career that leads to the promised land – **RETIREMENT!**”

Toth studied industrial psychology at The Ohio State University. He and his wife, Nancy, have two adult sons: Russell and Matthew.



**Dan Toth,  
NALC Director  
of Retired  
Members**

**“Paul Salazar made a motion that we cater dinner at the January meeting for the installation. Seconded by Jerry Patterson and passed.”**

Source: Minutes of the December 2019 General Meeting

# Minutes of the December 2019 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery, at 7:00 p.m. on the 18th day of December, 2019 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, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale , Shafter, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Assistant Editor and member of the Social and Recreation Committee Paul Greenfield, Photographer, Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary, Debbie Guillet; Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer and OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes. The Minutes of the November 20, 2019 meeting were read by Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Applications were received from Guadalupe Paredes, Lamont; Christopher Roland, Downtown; Rosalyn M. Priddy, Stockdale and Lora Lynn Chrostowski, Ridgecrest .

## REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES:

Teresa Ortega, of the Picnic Committee reported that "She's on it!" Basil Zuniga reported that there was a glitch with the newsletter labels this month. He provided a list of those who did not get a newsletter, and asked for their current address. He discussed the web version, the cartoons are in color. He read an e-mail he received. Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee reported on the Corn Hole Tournament, "It was fun." He reported that there are still 7 tickets for CALM still available. See Paul if you are interested. There will be a Bowling Tournament on February 16th, at Southwest Lanes. He also reported that there will be tickets available for the Angels vs. Dodgers on July 11th, the 7:10 game. Kim reported that there were no book sales this month, 586 books remain.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Treasurer Molly Biggar discussed the under payment of taxes in 2017 and an over payment of taxes in 2019. Teresa Ortega made a motion that we apply the over payment to the under payment. Seconded by Debbie Guillet and passed.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery reported that the National Director of Retired Members will be at the January General meeting to install the officers. He also reported that the branch made a donation to MDA of \$4,309.80 due to efforts of Norma Hamer. He thanked Norma for her hard work. The Steward Meetings will be January 8th and 15th. Paul Salazar made a motion that we cater dinner at the January meeting for the installation. Seconded by Jerry Patterson and passed.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery reminded members who have high school children or grandchildren that there are scholarships available. The deadline of the Dougherty Scholarship is December 31 and for the Saxsenmeir Scholarship is January 3. Basil Zuniga shared that in the last 10 years there have been three members whose children and grandchildren have won a scholarship. A discussion was held regarding mandating on Sundays and the OT being worked by carriers in December.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that \$7,682.41 was collected for December 2019.

**TREASURERS REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported for November 2019.

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance | \$73,033.10 |
| Dues and Income   | \$20,038.77 |
| Total Balance     | \$93,071.87 |
| Expenses          | \$13,497.23 |
| Ending Balance    | \$79,574.64 |

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Dicie Wilder. (22.00/22.00)

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

There were 37 members present (16 Retirees, 10 Veterans, 2 CCA's, 4 visitors)

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES

NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

## OUT THERE



# The Post Office is Getting a New CEO. Here's What Could Change.

Megan Brennan is retiring after a 33-year career that she launched as a mail carrier in Pennsylvania, and capped with five years as CEO of the United States Postal Service. A new postmaster general will take over in 2020.

Investors may want to think about who picks that person and what changes the new boss might pursue. Any change in strategic direction at the Post Office has implications for parcel shippers—such as United Parcel Service and FedEx—as well as e-commerce and maybe even banking.

“The board of governors set the strategic direction for the postal service,” Brennan said Thursday morning on the Post Office’s fiscal fourth-quarter conference call. “The five governors we have...have the business acumen, the experience, the knowledge to do that.”

The current governors have all been appointed by President Donald Trump. That fact, however, doesn’t mean they will choose someone with radically right-leaning, free-market principles, to run the place. There is a mandate to balance political ideologies on the board. Three of the current five governors have conservative histories. Two have Democratic leanings.

“We’d like to see someone with a plan for growth” at the helm, Jim Sauber, chief of staff for the National Association of Letter Carriers, told *Barron’s*. “The [USPS] has to diversify customer base and think differently.”

The NALC is the labor union representing city-based letter carriers.

An attempt to grow could mean offering additional services. Banking is probably out of the question. It isn’t unheard of for postal services to offer financial services. Japan’s post office, for instance, offers bank accounts and sells insurance. Any change of that nature, however, would require new laws. Imagine the explosion of lobbying activity if expansion into financial services was even hinted at.

Small legislative fixes could include allowing the USPS to deliver wine and beer, something currently prohibited. Even people familiar with the situation aren’t sure why. It might be a legacy of Prohibition.

More freedom to set prices would be a huge help. “We can’t cost cut our way to prosperity,” said Brennan. “We need the regulator to address the pricing system.”

The USPS essentially has a price cap on the business that generates about two-thirds of sales—traditional mail delivery. Congress, the postal service’s regulator, could address that.

The linkage between losses on delivering mail and profit from handling packages is critical. The power to set prices would mean—ultimately—better cash flow. It takes cash to invest in the network and drive down costs. The USPS is a stand-alone organization; it doesn’t receive assistance from the federal government.

Another potential legislative shift, likely to be pursued regardless of who is in charge, is a repeal of prefunding requirements. The post office is required to prefund health-care benefits for retirees, yet most public companies choose not to set aside money for those costs in advance. An end to health-care prefunding would affect the size of the losses the USPS reports, but probably wouldn’t alter the basis of competition within the parcel shipping industry. Right now, prefunding isn’t a cash issue; the Post Office records an expense for future benefits, but doesn’t actually set aside cash, saying it doesn’t have the funds available to do that.

Things could change if cash flow improves and the prefunding requirement remains in place. The Post Office could then find itself setting aside cash that it ought to be investing.

It is too soon to say who might wind up tackling these challenges.

“Part of the difficulty is it’s a \$70 billion business with pay capped at a cabinet secretary level,” explains Sauber. The average annual pay among CEOs of S&P 500 companies is \$15 million, about 70 times what a cabinet secretary can make. “It takes someone with a sense of civic duty.”

Brennan is the 74th postmaster general. Benjamin Franklin was the first.

- AL ROOT, NOVEMBER 18, 2019, BARRONS.COM

This article viewpoint courtesy of—and shamelessly cut and pasted from—the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma December 2019 issue of their NALC Branch 458 *SOONER SCRIPT*. Thank you, Editor David Miller!!!

# Never Hurts to Ask Questions...

By Eric Ellis,  
CSALC District 4 Officer



*As a member of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, I receive their monthly magazine which features a Q & A section. I recently posted a question which they published in their January 2020 edition which reads as follows:*

**Q:** I work for the United States Postal Service (USPS). When I reach 30 years of creditable service, I will be 54 years old. Should USPS offer me an early retirement at that point, and I accept, would I be eligible to receive the special retirement supplement when I reach my minimum retirement age (MRA) (in my case, 56 and 10 months) under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)?

**A:** Yes. Since the FERS age and service requirements to qualify for an early retirement under the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) or the Discontinued Service Retirement (DSR) is either age 50 with 20 years of creditable service or any age with 25 years of creditable service, you would qualify for either one if your agency offers you the voluntary option or if your agency attempted to involuntarily separate you (not for cause).

Non-special category employees who apply for early retirement must wait until they reach their FERS MRA before the FERS retirement annuity supplement (RAS) becomes payable with the regular monthly annuity-and it will be subject to an annual earnings test at that time. For more details about the FERS RAS, including the earnings test, please refer to the following weblink: [www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/types-of-retirement/#url=Annuity-Supplement](http://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/types-of-retirement/#url=Annuity-Supplement).

Additional details for both special category and non-special category employees can also be found in Chapter 51 of the FERS Handbook: [www.opm.gov/retirement-services/publications-forms/csrsfers-handbook/c051.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/publications-forms/csrsfers-handbook/c051.pdf).

Now as to why I asked the question in the first place: Recently, the Postmaster General said that the USPS will run out of money in 2024. Now some might say, well, this is a contract year, she's saying this as a scare tactic, trying to influence the neutral arbitrator, etc. And those could all be true. But it could also be true that we could be insolvent in a few years. After all, we have been referred to as the "richest bankrupt company" on the planet. It's true we have tens of billions of dollars in the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefit Fund. It's also the case that according to audits performed by the Hay Group and the Segal Company, **the federal government owes the postal service between \$50-100 billion**. And as our beloved National Association of Letter Carriers President Fredric Rolando has pointed out in congressional testimony, **the USPS is the federal government's third largest creditor**.

Yet at the same time, we haven't been making our congressionally mandated pre-funding payments. Yes, it's unfair that we are the only corporation in the world forced to pre-pay future retiree health benefit obligations 80-95 years in advance, or pre-pay at all! But the

2006 reform bill made such unfairness the law. And as I've stated previously, if you don't make your car or house payments, what happens? *They take your car or house!*

So yes, I asked the question to prepare for a possible eventuality. Do I think the government would let that happen? I would like to think that an organization at the center of a \$1.4 trillion mailing industry employing 7.5 million people and representing roughly eight percent of our gross domestic product would not be allowed to fail. For those of you who remember the so-called auto bailout ten years ago, many of the same characters opposing that move aren't our friends either. And the auto industry employs roughly the same number of people.

It doesn't hurt for any of you, ***in whatever stage of your postal career***, to take ownership!! Learn about your benefits!! Find out how proposed legislation would either harm or enhance your lifestyle!! Make sure you're in a position of strength in every possible scenario!!

“  
**Now as to why I asked the question in the first place: Recently, the Postmaster General said that the USPS will run out of money in 2024.**

And if YOUR future depends on a healthy and viable USPS, then help elect Democrats and Republicans who support us. And you can do that by contributing a few bucks per pay period to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. Take a look at the 300 co-sponsors of HR 2382 (233 Democrats, 67 Republicans), which would repeal the pre-funding mandate. **We support THESE congresspeople, regardless of political party.** Please contact me if you wish to sign up.

**Don't leave your future to chance!  
Ask questions! Stay informed!  
Be involved! Donate what  
you can to the LCPF.**



# SIGN ME UP!

Contribute to the  
Letter Carrier Political Fund using

\* PostalEASE – ONLINE Enrollment

\* Electronic Transfer

\* Annuity

*Sometimes we have a moment to make a decision which will have a big impact on the course of our lives. It isn't too farfetched to think that, if we don't make a certain decision, we will look back later and have some regrets. The choice to make an investment in YOUR future through the NALC LCPF will not be life-changing now — \$5 a paycheck isn't going to bankrupt you today. But, that same \$5 a paycheck may well bring about future security.....*

## OUR Letter Carrier Political Fund

By Kevin Gottlieb,  
NALC Branch 79 Vice President

I was one of “them”. For years I did not contribute or understand the Letter Carrier Political Fund (or what we used to call COLCPE). I was not going to give my hard earned dollars to any politician.

I was misinformed of the benefits of the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) and what it does to help my job and support the NALC and Letter Carriers!

The NALC does NOT use your union dues for political activity! It created a political action committee (PAC), which raises money for the purpose of defeating or electing candidates to elected office.

The following info is from the Letter Carrier Political Fund:

*“The Letter Carrier Political Fund is a **non-partisan** political action committee (PAC) established for the purpose of electing qualified candidates who support Letter Carriers and who are committed to maintaining a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service.*

*Each year, NALC fights to fend off attacks in Congress that threaten Letter Carriers' collective-bargaining rights, retirement benefits and livelihood. We've been successful — so far — and we want to continue helping to elect House and Senate candidates who will protect us, promote our issues and deliver our message to Washington.*

*Since union dues can't be used to support candidates for political office, NALC relies 100 percent on member contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, which in turn helps us support those on Capitol Hill who defend the issues that matter most to us. Our PAC brings together in Washington strong Letter Carrier advocates—from all political parties—who are dedicated to helping to defend a strong USPS that provides universal, innovative and affordable service.”*

It does not matter if you are Republican, Democrat, Conservative, Liberal etc... But what we ALL have in common is that we are Letter Carriers and the LCPF will ONLY contribute to those candidates (no matter with whom they identify) who will indeed support the issues important to Letter Carriers!

So, to my Brothers and Sisters of the NALC, I ask that you contribute to the LCPF!

Joining the LCPF is like having insurance to protect your job and our collective bargaining rights. Think about the power of our PAC if **ALL** Letter Carriers could make a contribution of \$5.00 a payday.

*“The Letter Carrier Political Fund identifies and contributes to candidates who support issues important to Letter Carriers and to ensure decisions that impact their lives are made with their best interests in mind.”*

The easiest way to become a member of the Letter Carrier Political Fund is to contribute through automatic payroll deduction. Contact the Branch office with questions about how you can contribute.

Until next time...Be Union!

Article courtesy of the Seattle, Washington December 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 79 *Seventy-Niner*

# — In Memorium —

# NEWS

Chartered  
December 20, 1890



AFL-CIO

*Capital City, Merged Branch No. 86, Hartford, Connecticut*

Nov, 2019

*...Messenger of sympathy and love, servant of parted friends, counselor of the lonely, bond of the scattered family, enlarger of the common life, carrier of news and knowledge, instrument of trade and industry, promoter of mutual acquaintance of peace and good will among men and nations..."*

## SECRETARY-TREASURER DANIEL NACIN KILLED IN ON-THE-JOB CRASH

by *Michael L. Willadsen, President*

It began around 11:30 A.M. on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. I received an emotional call from former New Britain Steward and Enfield Supervisor Donald Murphy that a terrible crash had occurred and I should get to Baystate Medical Center in Springfield. I hung up and received another call inquiring if it was a Branch 86 or Branch 46 {Springfield} member. Because the vehicle had been pushed into the Longmeadow, MA., side of the CT-MA border on Route 5, they utilized the vehicle number to identify it as belonging to the Enfield Post Office.

My mind then began racing, as I knew every one of the 55 carriers in Enfield and I was nauseous trying to figure out which carrier it was. As I was speeding up I-91N, I received a call that it was Dan, that he was gone (as was the other driver who slammed into him), and that I should keep quiet as they were having trouble locating Dan's wife, Tina.

The time spent at the hospital was a blur. I was led to an isolated holding room; Jerry & Sue Ugone, Enfield PM Joseph Bromley, and Tina and a friend of hers from work were already there. Tina immediately

asked me what I knew; I told her just that there had been a terrible "accident". Eventually, a Massachusetts State Trooper, a detective, and the ER physician and her staff came in to talk to us. We each made our way out, deep in our own thoughts and emotions.

Dan Nacin began his postal career barely out of high school, following in the steps of his father and other family members on Long Island, NY, as a clerk. He eventually transferred to Enfield, CT., and switched crafts to become a City Letter Carrier. (He laughingly told me that he tried being a 204b for a short period of time but decided it wasn't for him because none of the Enfield carriers would listen to him!) Just 59 years old, he had just attained 40 years of postal service and was one of the last CSRS employees in Enfield.

The next week was a blur. I stayed with the carriers in Enfield every morning until the day after Dan's service 7 days later. Area post offices flooded Enfield with CCA's so that the Enfield carriers could



Daniel J. Nacin

deal with their own emotions. On the day of the service, every route was covered by (outside) CCA's so that Dan's co-workers could attend. It had been decided to be more of a celebration of Dan's life than a somber, religious one. Four speakers were called on to talk about Dan: Dan's son Andrew, Brother-in-Law and NALC Branch 294 (Flushing, NY) President Tony Paolillo, myself, and Enfield retired member and Dan's concert buddy Lou Cutler. Another Enfield retired carrier, Randy Spaulding, played an acoustic version of "Danny Boy", and several of Dan's favorite Grateful Dead songs were played.

There was a gathering of the memorial service attendees at the Moose Club down the street from the funeral home. I watched as the crowd thinned out over the course of the afternoon until it was only the Enfield employees left. It was a beautiful day, and they were all enjoying being with one another in a way that I think Dan would have liked. Of course, Dan would have rather been there with them! Dan loved

life; he always had a concert he was going to; or a hockey game; or a baseball game; or a football game. He was always planning his next vacation with Tina, and they had just returned from an Alaskan cruise. He almost always ran out of Annual Leave because he was always enjoying life.

Dan and I went back 25 years. When I was the State President, I appointed him to the State Executive Board. He served on it ever since. I appointed him to be a Steward in Enfield, then to a vacancy on the Executive Board. Finally, I appointed him to our vacant Secretary-Treasurer position 5-6 years ago where we worked 15-20 hours per week together. Our relationship ran the full range of emotions, but we were friends. And despite everything, we had each other's backs, and every time the office door opens I look up out of habit half-expecting to see him. I miss my friend.

Article courtesy of the Hartford, Connecticut December 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 86 NEWS

## from the editor-guy

*This is a tragic event. It is also one which could strike any Letter Carrier at any time out on the route. Each of us comes to work in the morning and we anticipate that our days will end just as they have so many times before: Clock out and go home.*

*With some certainty, I can write that none of us in Branch 782 ever met Daniel Nacin; however, we did know him because he was one of us...*

*I feel that it is "right and just" that we pause to remember him and to offer a prayer for his loved ones and all others who surely miss him.*

BASIL ZUNIGA

*Daniel J. Nacin, 59, of Enfield, was delivering mail Thursday morning August 22, when he was struck by a driver who was eluding police and killed. The driver, David Cersosimo, 47, of Rocky Hill, Connecticut, also died in the crash.*

*Nacin was a 40-year postal service worker and followed in the steps of his father, who was a letter carrier for 25 years. He was a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers and served the postal union as the Secretary-Treasurer of NALC Merged Branch 86 and the Vice President of the Connecticut State Association of Letter Carriers.*

*In lieu of flowers, his family is asking for memorial donations to be made to the Postal Employees Relief Fund, PO Box 7653, Woodbridge, VA 22195. Donations can also be made to a local hospice, his obituary said.*

*Nacin leaves his wife Tina Quarequio, two sons Andy and Alex Nacin, their mother Donna Messina, and a large, extended family and many friends, it said.*

*Nacin had many interests outside work. He was a sports fan and loved cheering for the New York teams, the Yankees, Islanders and the Giants. When his sons were younger he also coached East Windsor baseball and Enfield hockey teams, his obituary said.*

*He was also a long-time blood donor and gave every chance he had. People are asked to donate a pint of blood in his memory and to help save a life, it said.*

Source— <https://www.masslive.com/news/2019/08/funeral-services-scheduled-for-daniel-nacin-postal-worker-killed-in-longmeadow-crash.html>

# Unless You are Never Going to Die, This is Totally Unimportant...

*It is the year-end time  
to ascertain that YOUR  
Designations of Beneficiary forms are current!  
When was the last time YOU checked YOUR  
designations of beneficiary?*

By John McPherson,  
NALC Branch 133

**M**ost employees and annuitants don't realize that they have several designations to keep current. If you don't have a designation on file, then the funds will be distributed according to the order of precedence.

That may be OK with you, but maybe it isn't. *Worse yet is an out-of-date designation giving the money to someone that you no longer wish to give it to...*

NOW is a good time to review your beneficiaries or submit new forms to designate your beneficiary! The latest form on file is what will be honored, should you pass.

Also noteworthy is that if one mails a designation of beneficiary form to either their employing agency or Office of Personnel Management, then pass away prior to the agency/OPM receiving the form, it will not be honored. *One must still be alive when the form is received by the agency/OPM for it to be valid.*

Here are some of the designations one may wish to make (the forms are available at OPM.gov or on liteblue.usps.gov for active employees):

**Standard Form 1152** is the Designation of Beneficiary form to submit for Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee. This form designates the payment of a deceased employee's last paycheck to include the payment of earned annual leave and any other miscellaneous monies payable to beneficiaries.

**Standard Form 3102** (for FERS covered employees). **Standard Form 2808** (for CSRS covered employees) designates the lump sum beneficiary for the deceased employee's retirement contributions — in the event that no entitlements exist for a surviving spouse and/or dependent unmarried children under the age of 18, or under the age of 22 if a full time student, or unmarried and incapable of self-support (regardless of age, provided the disability was established before age 18).

**Standard Form 2823** designates the payment of the value of an employee's life insurance benefits based on the coverage in effect at death.

*If you assigned ownership of your life insurance to another person, or if you did not assign your life insurance but there is a valid court order that governs payments of your benefits, then those have priority over any FEGLI designation of beneficiary form you complete, as explained on the form.*

Active employees may submit any of the listed forms, **EXCEPT THE Form TSP-3** form to: HRSSC, PO Box 970500 Greensboro, NC 27497-0500.

Retirees may submit the **Standard Form 2823** to: Office of Personnel Management, Retirement Operations Center, PO Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017-0045.

Both active employees and retirees send the **Form TSP-3** (Designation of Ben-

eficiary) for ones TSP account to: Thrift Savings Plan Service Office, P.O. Box 385021, Birmingham, AL 35238

The **ONLY** document the TSP will use to distribute death benefits is **Form TSP 3**, Designation of Beneficiary. By law, the TSP **MUST** pay your properly designated beneficiary, or beneficiaries — *under all circumstances.*

## ***Distribution According to the Statutory Order of Precedence:***

If you do not have a Designation of Beneficiary form on file with the TSP, your money will be distributed according to the following order of precedence required by law:

1. To your spouse;
2. If none, to your child or children equally, and to the descendants of deceased children;
3. If none, to your parents equally or your surviving parent;
4. If none, to your appointed executor or administrator of your estate; If none, to your next of kin who is entitled to your estate under the laws of the state in which you resided at the time of your death.

## ***How to Designate a Beneficiary:***

If you do not want your money distributed according to the statutory order of precedence explained above, follow these steps:

1. Complete **Form TSP-3** Designation of Beneficiary. The easiest way to do this, and the best way to avoid errors that could delay the process, is to use the "wizard," which you'll find by logging into **My Account** and selecting "Beneficiaries."

The wizard will prompt you to fill in the necessary information and warn you if you appear to be making an error.



When you're finished, it will generate a filled-out **Form TSP-3** for you to print. You can also download the form from the website and complete it manually.

2. Whether you use the wizard or complete **Form TSP-3** without it, *sign each page of the form and have a witness sign each page.*

3. Return the completed form to the address indicated on the form or fax it to the number provided. You **MUST** send the form directly to the TSP.

DO NOT submit **Form TSP-3** to your agency or service. Be aware that your

beneficiary designation will NOT be valid unless it is received by the TSP *on or before the date of your death.*

You will receive a confirmation letter in the mail after the TSP receives your form and processes it. You will also receive a letter from the TSP if there are errors on your form that prevent it from being accepted.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** Any beneficiary forms that you might have on file with your agency or service (including FEGLI, etc.) are NOT valid for the TSP and CAN-NOT be used to determine the distribution of your TSP account after your death.

***No matter how long the TSP has had your most recent Designation of Beneficiary form, they will continue to consider it valid unless you send them a new form requesting that they cancel or change it.***

Article courtesy of the Sacramento/North Highlands, California December 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 133 *Swing Room Gazette*

## RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE'S CORNER

# ARE YOU PLANNING TO RETIRE SOON?

By John Bonnano, NALC Branch 92

While the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) makes all decisions regarding retirement entitlement, current employees are required to apply for retirement through the USPS Human Resources Shared Services (HRSSC).

HRSSC can be reached by calling 877-477-3273, option 5. When calling HRSSC, be prepared to provide your Employee ID and PIN.

Upon request, HRSSC will:

1. Mail an individualized annuity estimate based on a projected retirement date provided by the employee;
2. Schedule and provide telephonic individual pre-retirement counseling;
3. Mail a packet of information (usually called the 'blue book') of forms and guidance.

HRSSC retirement services can alternately be accessed by employees close to retirement eligibility on-line using the LiteBlue eRetire application. Employees must know their Employee ID and USPS Pin numbers to access eRetire.

The LiteBlue eRetire application allows the following:

1. View and print individualized annuity estimates;
2. Request and obtain a retirement application packet in one of two ways: download and print a retirement application packet or order a retirement application packet and receive it in the mail.
3. Schedule a retirement counseling session.

In addition to information available from the USPS HRSSC, retirement information is available from OPM; and retirement information and advice is available to NALC members from the NALC Retirement Department.

The NALC Retirement Department publishes a leaflet titled "Preparing for Retirement," and Question & Answer booklets on retirement matters for CSRS and FERS ([https:// www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/retirement/planning -to- retire](https://www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/retirement/planning-to- retire))

***"Our retirees have long memories, and their wisdom can be invaluable. They know our history, our traditions and our struggles, and they remember how hard they fought to win and protect our current rights and benefits—and how precious and vulnerable those can be. Retirees inspire us."***

**NALC President Fredric Rolando**

Article courtesy of the Portland, Maine September-November 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 92 *CARRIER'S CORNER*



by Paul Salazar  
93305 Shop Steward

I started compiling some pertinent info for some of my CCAs who will be converted to Career soon. It kind of turned into more than I thought it would. Feel free to use anything in here you'd like for the newsletter. It's a lot. I go on a rant for the last two pages...

# Newly Converted Career Carriers' Resource Guide

(All page numbers in this six page article are in reference to the *City Carrier Assistant Resource Guide*, unless noted)

**BACKGROUND CHECK:** When you were hired by the Postal Service as a CCA you were required to pass a security check called a Special Agency Check with Inquiries (SACI). When you are converted to full-time career status, you are further required to have a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI). The NACI is more extensive. However, both of these security checks require you to be fingerprinted. These requirements can be found in Section 56 of Handbook EL-312.

National-level interpretive step M-01854 - Reasonable and necessary time spent by CCAs obtaining fingerprints necessary for a background investigation under the subject circumstance is compensable time. Additionally, the Postal Service is responsible for any direct costs for fingerprinting. (Pg. 104)

**FEHB:** You have 60 days to select a health insurance plan under Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) from date of conversion. If you were enrolled in the USPS Non-Career Employee Health Benefits Plan and converted to a career position, your enrollment is terminated the last day of the month that is 28 days after you are converted to a career position. If you choose to enroll in a FEHB plan your USPS Non-Career Employee Health Benefits Plan coverage will end when your FEHB coverage begins. (Pg 105)

**FEGLI:** Once you are converted to career status you are automatically enrolled in FEGLI (Federal Employee Group Life Insurance) to receive basic life insurance unless you waive coverage. Above the basic insurance, the FEGLI has additional optional coverage that you can purchase for you or your spouse and dependents. To elect any of the optional coverages, you must enroll within 31 days from the day you were converted to full-time career status. Unlike Open Season for FEHB which happens every year, Open Season for FEGLI rarely happens so if you are interested take advantage now. (Pg. 107)

**FERS:** Once you are converted to full-time career status, you will be automatically enrolled in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). The Federal Employees Retirement System has three components: • FERS Basic Benefit Plan • Social Security • Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The FERS Basic Benefit and Social Security are defined benefit plans. The Postal Service will with-hold your share of the cost of the basic annuity and Social Security each pay day.

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is different. *You have complete control over how much you contribute and the funds that money is invested in.* The decisions you make over time will directly affect the future value of your TSP. The Postal Service automatically contributes 1% of your base pay and will match your contributions up to 5% of your base pay. If you contribute nothing you will still receive the 1%. (Pg 109)

**PROBATIONARY PERIOD:** The MOU" Re: Article 12.1 - Probationary Period" states that CCAs who have completed a cumulative 360 days as a CCA will not serve a probationary period as a career employee. (Pg. 139 of the National Agreement)

**SENIORITY:** You start earning seniority on the day you become full-time career and you continue to earn seniority as

## "OuT tHeRe"



long as your service as a Letter Carrier is uninterrupted in the Letter Carrier craft in the same installation. All of Bakersfield is considered the same installation for seniority. (Pg. 112)

**BIDDING:** Once a CCA is converted to full-time career status, they are immediately eligible to bid on vacant duty assignments in their installation in accordance with Article 41.1 of the National Agreement. (Pg. 138)

**ANNUAL LEAVE:** A employee newly-converted to full-time status will:

Accrue leave based on their total creditable years of career service.

Receive their leave at the beginning of the year.

Receive their leave prorated at the beginning of the year, based on when they might step up to the next accrual rate based on their total years of creditable service.

Receive the leave they are expected to earn for the remainder of the year, from the point they are converted to full-time status.

Have their leave balance reduced, by the amount of leave they earn each pay period, for every 80 hours of Leave Without Pay they take throughout the year.

Employees who have less than three years of creditable service will receive 13 days per year of annual leave, 104 hours. Once he or she reaches three years of creditable service, they will earn 20 days of annual leave per year until they reach 15 years of service at which point he or she will start earning 26 days per year of annual leave. (Pg. 115)

**EMERGENCY ANNUAL LEAVE:** If a genuine emergency requires you to take annual leave without prior approval, you must notify postal authorities promptly about the emergency and the expected length of absence. As soon as possible after returning to duty, employees must submit Form 3971 and furnish convincing evidence of the emergency to the supervisor. Although management is not required to approve requests for emergency leave, any arbitrary or unreasonable denial may be subject to a grievance. (Pg.118)

**SICK LEAVE:** For full-time Letter Carriers, sick leave is accrued at the rate of 4 hours per pay period. Unlike annual leave, the accrual rate does not change based on your total years of creditable service. You earn it at the same rate throughout your career. Also, unlike annual leave, sick leave is not credited to you at the beginning of the year or at the time you convert to full-time status. Sick leave is earned "as you go" and credited to your balance each pay period you are in a pay status.

Anytime you are requesting sick leave in advance you should always request it from your supervisor by filling out and submitting a PS Form 3971. This is the proper way to request leave, plus you should always have a supervisor provide you with a

copy of your completed and signed PS Form 3971 to protect you in the event it gets lost or misplaced.

**Unscheduled Absences:** There may be times where you do not know in advance that you will be unable to report to work and perform your normal Letter Carrier duties. You may unexpectedly become ill or injured. If this happens and either circumstance prevents you from reporting to work, that would be considered an unscheduled absence.

Typically, Management will issue discipline for "Irregular Attendance/Not being regular in attendance" based on unscheduled absences. Management also tracks unscheduled absences for patterns of calling in sick/emergency annual leave. Providing a doctor's note does not prevent management from issuing discipline for attendance. Only protected FMLA leave can prevent management from pursuing discipline for attendance.

In certain circumstances you are allowed to use sick leave to care for a family member. If you do, that is called sick leave for dependent care. Letter Carriers are allowed to use up to 80 hours of sick leave each year to care for sick or injured family members, however this does not exempt you from discipline.

#### OUT THERE



**FMLA:** Letter Carriers are eligible for FMLA protected leave if they have:

1. Worked for the Postal Service for at least 12 months. (CCA breaks in service do not cancel out accrued time of service for FMLA purposes since the 12 months do not have to be consecutive.) The months of service may be accrued at any time during the 7-year period immediately preceding the leave (including time served as a TE).
2. Accrued at least 1,250 work hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the leave.

Every eligible postal employee — including a CCA — is guaranteed FMLA protected leave. Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 12 workweeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period. (Pgs. 119-127)

**OUT THERE**



**HOLIDAYS:** Career Letter Carriers enjoy the benefit of 10 paid holidays per year. Those paid holidays, listed in ELM 518, are as follows: New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday, Washington’s Birthday/Presidents’ Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans’ Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day. (Pg. 131)

To be eligible for holiday pay, an employee must be in a pay status the last hour of the employee’s scheduled workday prior to or the first hour of the employee’s scheduled workday after the holiday.

Presumed Holidays/Mandating to work on your Holiday, Pecking Order To Work On A Holiday- 1. Volunteer full-time regulars on their holiday or their day designated as a holiday, by seniority. -2. City Carrier Assistants (CCA) -3. Volunteer full-time regulars on their non-scheduled day by seniority- 4. Part-time flexible carriers (PTF) -5. Non-volunteer full-time regulars, regardless of whether it’s their nonscheduled day, their holiday or their day designated as a holiday, by juniority. (Pg. 12 of the Bakersfield Local Memorandum of Understanding)

**Exemptions From The Holiday Pecking Order\***

1. Any Letter Carrier who is on a full week of scheduled annual leave will not be subject to being mandated to work on the holiday. As an example, a Carrier who is on annual leave from Monday through Saturday of any given week, will not be mandated to work on any holiday or designated holiday during that week.

2. A Carrier who is on annual leave for a full week prior to or

after a long weekend is not subject to the mandating procedures outlined under the Holiday Pecking Order. (\*Page. 12 of the Bakersfield Local Memorandum of Understanding)

**OVERTIME:** Upon conversion from CCA to a career employee you will need to get up to speed on some overtime provisions of the National Agreement which previously didn’t apply to you.

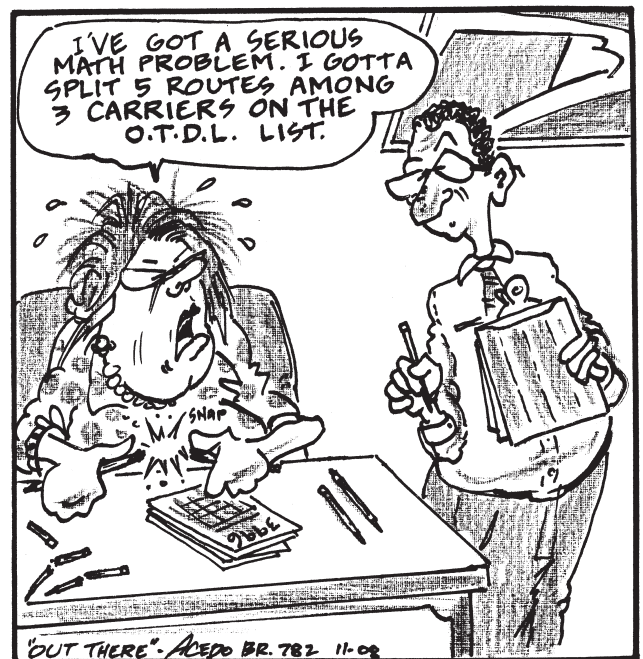
One decision you will need to make once you are converted to career is whether or not you will sign up on the overtime lists, also known as the ODL list. **By signing the overtime desired list (ODL), you are committing to work any and all overtime assigned to you.** Normally, employees on the overtime desire list who don’t want to work more than 10 hours a day or 56 hours a week shall not be required to do so as long as employees who do want to work more than 10 hours a day or 56 hours a week are available to do the needed work without exceeding the 12 hours per day and 60 hours per week limitations.

Another option on the list is referred to as “Work Assignment”. Signing this list commits you to only working overtime on your own assignment on your regularly scheduled days.

**Signing Overtime Desired Lists:** You can sign up on the overtime desired lists/work assignment as described above during the two-week period prior to each calendar quarter. Once you sign an overtime desired list you will remain on the list from quarter to quarter until you ask to be removed, however you can remove your name from the list at any time during the quarter.

For those employees who do not wish to work overtime, Article 8 of the National Agreement includes protection against mandated overtime. This is not to say that if you do not sign an overtime desired list you will never be required to work overtime; but, the NALC has negotiated some very strong language to protect

**OUT THERE**



employees that do not wish to work overtime. Management is required to follow a “pecking order” of auxiliary assistance prior to forcing Letter Carriers not on the ODL to work overtime on their own assignment on a regularly scheduled day. (Pgs. 141-143)

**WORK HOURS GUARANTEES:** Full-Time Employee Schedules. Article 8, Sections 1 and 2.C provide that the work week for all full-time Carriers (i.e., full-time Regulars and full-time Flexibles — including unassigned Regulars, Reserve Regulars and Carrier Technicians), consists of five days, forty hours per week, and eight hours per day. As a “Regular” you are now **GUARENTEED** 8 hours a day; therefore, you do not have to work less than 8 hours if your work happens to take you less than 8 hours (undertime) or use your own leave if you do not want to.

**WEINGARTEN RIGHTS:** All Letter Carriers, including CCAs (regardless of how long they have been employed) have Weingarten Rights, which means you have the right to have a union steward present during a meeting in which management asks you questions that could lead to discipline.

This rule applies during any investigatory interview — whether management is searching for facts and trying to determine the employee’s guilt or deciding whether or not to impose discipline. These questions could be posed during a closed door meeting, through text messaging, a phone conversation or through an informal conversation at the supervisor’s desk. In any situation, if the employee reasonably believes that discipline could result, they have Weingarten representation rights.

The Shop Steward cannot exercise Weingarten Rights on the employee’s behalf. And, unlike “Miranda Rights” which involve criminal investigations, the employer is not required to inform the employee of the Weingarten right to representation. **YOU MUST ASK FOR REPRESENTATION YOURSELF.** You can say “If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without my Union representation present, I respectfully choose not to answer any questions or participate in this discussion.”

Although postal employees are required to cooperate with postal investigations, the Carrier still has the right under Weingarten to have a Shop Steward present before answering questions. In the event a Steward is not made readily available — or if a Steward is not present after you have asked for one — you may respond that you are willing to cooperate in any investigation, and that you will answer their questions once a Steward is provided. **You should answer all questions with this answer until the questioning stops or a shop steward is provided.**

**FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:** All Letter Carriers, regardless of their status as a non-career or career employee, are required to follow instructions from their supervisors, except when an order would cause imminent danger to life or limb or violates the law. Under all other circumstances, the instruction

should be obeyed and you should promptly notify your Shop Steward if you believe the order violated your rights so he or she can investigate the situation and file a grievance if appropriate.

**GRIEVANCES:** The grievance process starts with “Informal Step A”, which involves the steward discussing the issue with the supervisor. This initial step gives supervisors a chance to fix the problem immediately by talking to the Steward without much paperwork. At “Informal Step A”, the grievant or the union representative must discuss the grievance with the grievant’s immediate supervisor within 14 days of the date the grievant or the union first learned — or should have learned — of the situation which gave rise to the grievance.

***A Shop Steward only has 14 day to investigate, request information, prepare for the grievance meeting, and meet with the supervisor from the day a possible violation of the contract has occurred so notify your steward ASAP.***

### “OuT tHeRe”



**ESTIMATING YOUR OFFICE AND STREET TIME:** For Letter Carriers, the morning routine of estimating workload and, when necessary, requesting auxiliary assistance (Overtime) can be a stressful situation we deal with on a daily basis. Management refers to this as “negotiating” but the reality is a Carrier is ESTIMATING his/her time.

Over the years, the Postal Service has developed and used many different time-projection tools. The misuse of these tools by frontline supervisors has been the subject of multiple grievances that have risen to the national level.

Both Handbook M-39, Handbook M-41 and several national-level settlements have defined a process that both Letter Carriers and managers are required to follow when a Letter Carrier cannot complete his or her daily assignment within their normally scheduled timeframe.

1. Verbally inform your manager. Sections 131.41 and 131.42 of Handbook M-41 require you to verbally inform your manager when you believe you cannot carry all the mail distributed to your route in eight hours or within your normal schedule.

2. Request PS Form 3996. Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39 requires the manager to provide you with a PS Form 3996 when you request it. When you request a 3996, no matter what your manager says to you, say, "I am requesting a 3996" and explain the reasons for your request. If you are denied the form, immediately request to see your shop steward.

3. Fill out the form completely. It is important that you fill out the form completely. In the reason for the request box, write down why you believe you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours. Fully explain the reasons for your request. General comments such as "heavy volume" or "route overburdened" are not enough in this section. Sometimes managers will tell you that you don't need the requested overtime or auxiliary assistance because of what DOIS projects for your route. Multiple national-level settlements (e.g., M-01664 and M-01769) have held that these time projections are not the sole determinant of your daily workload. Nothing can replace the opinion of the professional letter carrier. Simply provide your best estimate and the reasons why and move on to Step 4.

4. Keep your cool! Don't lose your cool! While this process can be frustrating, you will do nothing to help yourself by becoming angry. If your manager denies your request for overtime or assistance, tell him or her that you will do your best. Politely ask what you should do if you are not able to deliver all the mail and return to the office when they want you back.

5. Don't argue. There is no reason to argue with your manager at this point. The best thing you can do is tell your manager that you will do your best and ask for a copy of your PS Form 3996. Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39 requires managers to provide you with a copy if you request it. ***Finish your office work and go to the street. All you have to do is your best. Work professionally. Never compromise your safety or skip breaks or lunches to make it back to the office by a certain time.***

6. Don't make decisions. Letter carriers get paid to deliver mail. Managers get paid to make decisions. *If you realize that you will not be able to deliver all the mail and make it back to the office by the time the manager approved, you should do everything you can to put any further decisions in the manager's hands.*

The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor per local instructions. If you have no local instructions, try calling around two hours before the time you are scheduled (approved on PS Form 3996) to be back. Let your supervisor know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask whether they want you to bring the mail back or finish the route. Follow whatever instructions your supervisor or manager gives you.

If the supervisor or manager refuses to tell you what to do with

the rest of the mail or if you can't finish your assigned duties in the amount of time initially specified by your supervisor, you should return to the office in the allotted time and ask for further instructions. Again, you should follow whatever instructions your supervisor or manager gives you. (Pgs. 83-89)

## IMPORTANT NALC RESOURCES: "OuT tHeRe"



**NALC APP** - As technology increases our ability to communicate, NALC must stay ahead of the curve. From websites to email to social media, this union has continually developed the tools to put the most up-to-date information and resources into the hands of our stewards and members. We've now taken the next step with the NALC Member App for iPhone and Android smartphones. The app was developed at headquarters with the needs of the average member in mind.

**"NALC.ORG" AND "WWW.782NALC.COM"** - The NALC website has proven to be a powerful tool for the union, filled with up-to-the-second news and updates, and loaded with comprehensive resources and publications.

**THE POSTAL RECORD & OUR OWN BRANCH 782 E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE** - These publications present our union's membership with important updates on political, legislative, labor and workplace issues, with an emphasis on factual presentation so members can make informed decisions. It also explains how members can help make their union stronger, their Postal Service better and their country more responsive to the needs of working people.

**GOLDEN EMPIRE BRANCH 782 UNION HALL** - Located at 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301. Our union hall is where all of us, the membership, to join together to discuss issues, express our opinions, and form solidarity with our union brothers and sisters.

**NATIONAL, STATE, AND BRANCH 782 OFFICERS AND STEWARDS** - Talk to us, ask us questions, pick our brains, ask

why YOUR union and YOUR union reps do what we do! In this busy world we are just as busy as you. Our kids play sports, our family members have events, and our loved ones get sick too. So if we can find the time to care, so can you.

## **The LCPF LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND**

**I CANNOT STRESS HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS FOR OUR FUTURE AND OUR FAMILY'S FUTURE** - The Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) is a non-partisan political action committee (PAC) established for the purpose of electing qualified candidates who support Letter Carriers and who are committed to maintaining a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service.

Each year, NALC fights to fend off attacks in Congress that threaten Letter Carriers' collective-bargaining rights, retirement benefits and livelihood. We've been successful so far, and we want to continue helping to elect House and Senate candidates who will protect us, promote our issues and deliver our message to Washington.

Since union dues can't be used to support candidates for political office, the NALC relies 100 percent on member contributions to the LCPF, which in turn helps us support those on Capitol Hill who defend the issues that matter most to us. Our PAC brings together in Washington strong Letter Carrier advocates—from all political parties—who are dedicated to helping to defend a strong USPS that provides universal, innovative and affordable service.

# THE NALC

Our union! Yours and mine! Only together can **WE** be strong. And the more members that participate, the stronger we become.

*There was a hard choice that Letter Carriers had to make back in 1970 when they chose to strike against the Post Office. They worked for an employer that didn't value their hard work, didn't value their dedication to their job, and didn't value them as people! They chose to rise up and stand together, against a system that was rigged to hold them and their families down, and risk losing their jobs!*

Those brave men and women laid the groundwork for everything **WE** Letter Carriers have now: Rights, Benefits, Protections, Decent Wages, and Collective Bargaining. We owe them more than most current Letter Carriers know. And — if you don't know your history — then you're doomed to repeat it.

Unfortunately, now-a-days, many Letter Carriers take their rights, benefits, wages, protections, and collective bargaining for granted. Letter Carriers are simply too busy to pay attention, or simply don't care. These Letter Carriers have a false sense of security and don't understand the threats **WE** face.

Whether it's reducing **OUR** pay by making us pay more for our

pensions and benefits and/or reducing **OUR** level of pension and benefits that we've worked our entire career for, the threat is real.

Executive orders from **OUR** President have eroded several rights from federal employees, making it more difficult for unions to represent those federal employees. And **OUR** legislators in congress have also tried to attack **OUR** rights and benefits through legislation. We've weathered the storm so far through the hard work of our national union leaders, but...

**IT IS TIME!!!** Do something about it before we lose what was fought for so long ago in 1970 and through the years since!

It's as simple as...

**DONATING TO LCPF!  
ANY BIWEEKLY AMOUNT WILL  
HELP — \$1, \$2,\$5 OR MORE!**

**DOWNLOAD THE NALC APP AND  
TURN ON THE NOTIFICATIONS!**

**CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSMEN,  
AND SENATORS WHEN THE NALC  
APP NOTIFIES YOU TOO!  
THE PROCESS IS EASY, YOU CAN  
CALL BEFORE OR AFTER WORK.  
AND, IF YOU WANT EASIER, THEN  
TEXT RESIST TO 50409 AND USE  
RESIST.BOT, IT'S EVEN EASIER TO  
USE AND FREE OF CHARGE.  
RESIST.BOT ALLOWS YOU TO  
CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES  
THROUGH TEXT AND TAKES LESS  
THAN 2 MINUTES. YOU CAN EVEN  
COPY AND PASTE THE MESSAGE  
THE NALC APP IS ASKING  
YOU TO DELIVER.**

**THESE 3 ACTIONS WILL MAKE  
OUR UNION MUCH STRONGER!**



This excellent article originally published in the August 2018 NALC Branch 782 E.A. BAKER UNION UPDATE

# May All Your Troubles Last As Long As Your New Years Resolutions

“Knowledge is realizing that the street is one-way. Wisdom is looking in both directions anyway.”

**Albert Einstein**

“I didn’t climb to the top of the food chain, to eat carrots!”

**Ron White**

“I didn’t choose to attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.”

**Mark Twain**

“The early bird get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.”

**Steven Wright**

“History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely — once they have exhausted all other alternatives.”

**Abba Eban**

“If you can smile, when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.”

**Ashleigh Brilliant**

“Sometimes, I need what only you can provide: Your Absence!”

**Ashleigh Brilliant**

“There is only one thing that keeps me from breaking you in half! I don’t want two of you around!”

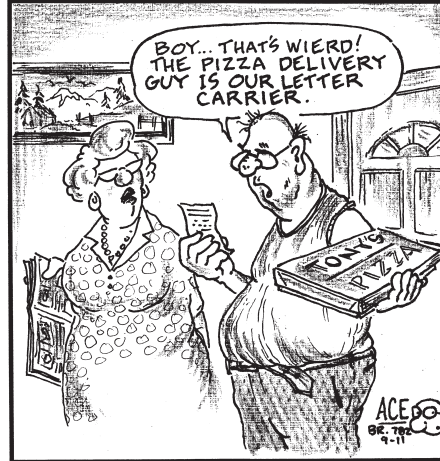
“It’s not always the Cream that Rises to the Top, sometimes it’s the Pond Scum!”

“Who left the bag of idiots open?”

## “OuT tHeRe”



## OUT THERE



“I was going to give you a nasty look, but I see you already have one!”

“No, I’m not insulting you, I’m describing you!”

“Everybody has the right to be stupid, but you’re abusing the privilege!”

“The trash gets picked up tomorrow. Be Ready!”

“Yes I walked away mid-conversation. You were boring me to death, and my survival instincts kicked in!”

“They say opposites attract. I hope you meet someone who is good-looking, intelligent, and cultured !”

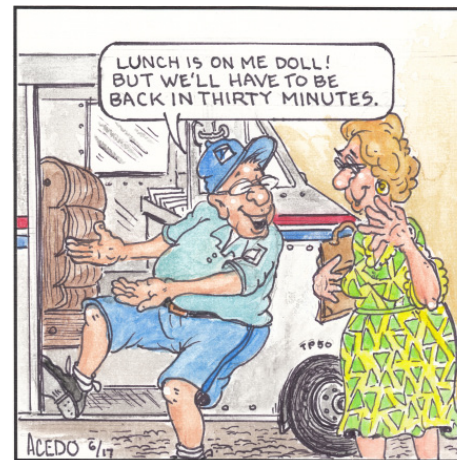
“I was hoping for a battle of wits, but it appears you are unarmed!”

“Been there, ruined that!”

“He has all the virtues I dislike, and none of the vices I admire.”

**Winston Churchill**

## “OuT tHeRe”



## “OuT tHeRe”



“My kind of loyalty is loyalty to one’s country, NOT to it’s institutions or it’s office holders !”

**Mark Twain**

“Always tell the truth. That way, you don’t have to remember what you said !”

**Mark Twain**

“The new political gospel: Public office is private graft !”

**Mark Twain**

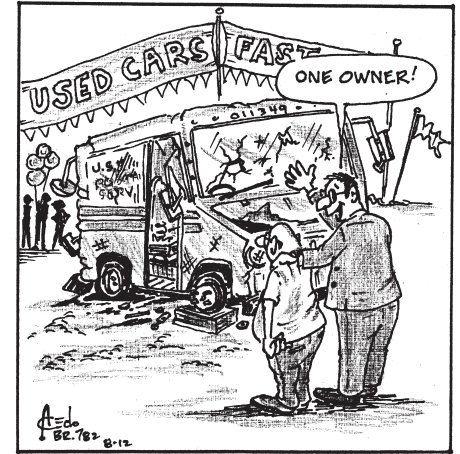
“Loyalty to the country Always! Loyalty to the government, when it deserves it!”

**Mark Twain**

***“I can only please one person a day!  
Today isn’t your day!  
Tomorrow doesn’t look good either!”***

**MARK RAMIREZ**  
Retired Letter Carrier  
NALC HBP Representative  
The Golden Empire Branch 782

## OUT THERE





# 2020 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**  
 Medicare 1-800-633-4227  
 Suicide Hotline 1-800-784-2433  
 Suicidal Thoughts?? Talk With Someone... 1-800-273-8255

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) 204-5592**

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

Go to [NALC.ORG](http://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...

# snippets

Here are excerpts from a number of articles from various NALC newsletters from all over the country. Your knowledge can lead to better informed decisions...

## Cheektowaga Polar Plunge

By Becky Stockman,  
NALC Branch 3 Vice President

With the long winter months comes many new challenges for the Letter Carrier craft. The sun goes down early, the weather changes on a dime and the street hazards increase greatly. Things that you never even noticed before now pose a threat to your safety.

Whose responsibility is it to keep you safe delivering in the dark? ***That would be YOU!***

Delivering in the dark is **your** call. Please keep in mind that darkness alone is *not* a valid reason to not deliver, Arbitrators have already determined that darkness itself is not unsafe. *It is what the darkness does to your environment that could cause an unsafe situation.* If it is safer to switch up parts of your routes so that you are delivering the safer portion in the dark, let management know that you want to do so and the reason.

In the Cheektowaga station, we had a CCA from another station delivering on a street that she had never in her life has been on before. She was delivering in the dark, after a pretty decent snowfall. Well, she ended up walking knee deep into a Koi pond! Thankfully, she did not get hurt, just boots full of water and very cold feet.

After that, she did bring the mail back and went home — after, of course, some drama from management.

Where you may know your route like the back of your hand, the person filling in for you is ***literally*** out there *in the dark...* **PLEASE take the time to make and case “Do Not Cross” lawn cards for deliveries that have any potential hazard to a Carrier!!!**

When delivering in the dark, stick to the safest path possible. If that means only using the sidewalks because they are well lighted then so be it. **YOU** do what **YOU** need to do to keep yourself safe! Remember, wearing a headlight is NOT a requirement. The scanners have a flashlight option available for use. The use of grippers is also optional.

As soon as the sun goes down in Western New York, it tends to get epic cold, so extra warm up breaks may be needed. If you have to text back 5-6 different times with a changed return time, who cares? ***It takes what it takes to do the job safely!!***

When you know you will be out delivering mail after dark, remember that you do have rights.

1. Fill out a PS 3996, Inform your supervisor in the morning of your need of additional time in order to complete your street duties due to weather and darkness.

2. When out on the street you realize that you definitely will be out longer than anticipated after dark, text back on your scanner to inform your supervisor of the additional time needed to safely complete your job.

3. Attempt to continue.

4. If while attempting delivery, you literally experience a safety hazard, (i.e. stumbling, tripping, Koi pond, you hear dogs barking but are unable to see that threat.) Call your supervisor. Explain your situation and notify them that you cannot safely continue delivery then return to your station.

5. COMPLETE FORM PS1571 - Curtailment form for the undelivered mail. *Be sure to ask for a copy of this form.*

If management gives you a direct order to go back out and deliver, go back out, assess the situation for any changes and make the safety call again. If management tries forcing you to deliver in unsafe conditions, call your Steward, call the hall or call any officers (phone numbers on the inside back cover) for assistance and have your Steward file an article 14 grievance and possibly a hostile work environment.

Stay safe and don't take the Cheektowaga Polar Plunge!

Abridged article courtesy of the Buffalo, New York  
December 2019 NALC Branch 3 BUZZ

## Stuck in the P.O. With You\*

By Jerry Lonergan,  
NALC Branch 2008 Trustee

Perhaps the most egregious example of wasting money is the over-hiring of new employees. It costs close to \$5,000 to process a CCA, including background checks, drug testing, orientation, driver skills, four days of Academy and three days with an OJI (On-the- Job Instructor).

In some of our offices, there are more CCAs than needed and it's not uncommon for a new CCA to quit for lack of work hours, thereby throwing that five grand down the drain. Some of these people leave full-time jobs to pursue a career with the Postal Service. Others are let go with the reason that they're not picking up the job quick enough, which is a little difficult to do when they only work a couple of days a week.

This is a job that is learned over a period of time and the more you do it, the more comfortable and confident you get.

Abridged article portion is courtesy of the October 2019  
NALC Branch 2008 Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update

*\*With a nod to a line from the Stealers Wheel song "Stuck in the Middle With You": "Trying to make some sense of it all. But, I can see that it makes no sense at all."*

# President's Report

By Richard Najera,  
Branch 231 President

**B**y the time this article goes to print, the twenty-eight days of no penalty along with increased parcel volume — while regular mail volume declines — will have arrived with a fair amount of uncertainty this year.

With Amazon having pulled out of so many markets nationwide (affecting not only the USPS, but our classic competitors of UPS and FedEx as well) and yet with so

much volume still coming from the massive e-commerce company, it will be hard to predict how much volume we will see.

Yes, the Service will be given some idea of where and when to expect shipments at the units.

But, with Amazon having purchased and maintaining its own delivery fleet, the only parcel volume anyone else will receive will likely be the “spillover” they couldn’t handle. It may or may not be huge.

As Carriers, all we can hope is that management has a plan — and then even more contingency plans — for whatever may come down the line.

And should it all go bad? Stick to what you have learned and don’t let anyone push you to do anything more than work safely and efficiently! During peak season, not a damned thing has changed about the expectations of the job.

Running to “make the numbers” is still a management fantasy with which no one should engage.

Instead, please do what’s right and work safely during this peak season and make it back home to your families at the end of each day!

This abridged/modified excerpt courtesy of the Fresno, California December 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 231 *Postman's View*

*I wrote about this sometime ago and now its problem again. Recently at West, a supervisor was on a rant about the reasons you need extra time for your route. This supervisor will not accept heavy parcels, heavy volume etc. as legitimate reasons for the need for overtime.*

*Nor would he accept “gas” as a reason for overtime since carriers are not to gas their LLVs on overtime. I explained to him that it takes time to get gas and that it IS a legitimate reason. His reply was that the time it takes to get gas was built into the route. **I told him that it wasn't.** Since getting gas is not a daily occurrence, street inspectors delete that time from 3999s. I told him that even if I fill the LLV up on straight time on the drive to the route, it is an extra 15 minutes that adds to the whole day. The supervisor is closed minded. But of course, I will continue to put ‘gassing LLV’ on the days that I need to.*

Excised portion of an article courtesy of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa January 2020 issue of the NALC Branch 373 *Eastern Iowa Reporter*

By John J. Pffifner,  
Branch 373 V.P.

3996s

## Questions about Opting? Want Answers?

By Steven Abasta,  
Branch 24 Executive V.P.

We get a lot of calls from Stewards in regards to the opting process which is covered in Article 41 of the National Agreement.

### Articles 41.2.B.3 & 4 read as follows:

3. Full-time reserve Letter Carriers, and any unassigned full-time Letter Carriers whose duty assignment has been eliminated in the particular delivery unit, may exercise their preference by use of their seniority for available craft duty assignments of anticipated duration of five (5) days or more in the delivery unit within their bid assignment areas, except where the local past practice provides for a shorter period.

4. Part-time flexible Letter Carriers may exercise their preference by use of their seniority for vacation scheduling and for available full-time craft duty assignments of anticipated duration of five (5) days or more in the delivery unit to which they are assigned. City Carrier Assistants may exercise their preference (by use of their relative standing as defined in Section 1.f of the General Principles for the Non-Career Complement in the Das Award) for available full-time craft duty assignments of anticipated duration of five (5) days or more in the delivery unit to which they are assigned that are not selected by eligible career employees.

The language above gives all unassigned full-time Letter Carriers as well as CCAs the right to opt for vacant Letter Carrier assignments. Management may not deny these rights to any unassigned regular or CCA.

Article 41.2.B.5 states that a Letter Carrier who, pursuant to subsections 3 and 4 above, has selected a craft duty assignment by exercise of seniority shall work that duty assignment for its duration.

An otherwise qualified employee on light duty may not be denied hold down assignments as long as the employee can perform all the duties of the assignment. Management likes to tell Carriers that they cannot opt because they are on light or limited duty. *The Contract states differently.*

In order for a position to be placed for opt, the vacancy must include five or more work days, rather than vacancies that span a period of five calendar days but may have fewer than five days of scheduled work. However, these anticipated five days may include a holiday.

If Management tells you that they don’t have to post an opt during a holiday week, please direct them to page 41-12 of the JCAM. The language clearly provides that the five work days may include a holiday.

Abridged article courtesy of the November/December 2019 Los Angeles, California NALC Branch 24 *ANGEL CITY CARRIER*

# WTF is a 1571?

By Scott M. Anderson,  
Branch 79 Shop Steward

Along with a multitude of other United States Postal Service forms, you may not regularly use a 1571, but you likely should.

The PS Form 1571 is the “Undelivered Mail Report.” *What does that mean to the normal Letter Carrier?* The rest of this article will inform you when, how, and why to use the PS Form 1571, as well as a few other important pieces of information about our reporting requirements as Letter Carriers.

There are a few times when the PS Form 1571 should be completed:

- 1.) Any time a member of management instructs you to curtail mail.
- 2.) Any time you are instructed to bring back mail/are unable to deliver all the mail assigned to you within your work hour limitations.

**How do I fill out a PS Form 1571?** First, you should request the form from your supervisor. If there are not any forms where your station has forms, request your supervisor to print one out on the computer.

If you’re instructed to curtail mail (i.e.: “Manage your ADVO,” etc.), management is required to provide the Carrier with the form.

If it turns out that the reason the mail is coming back is because you might be an 8-hour carrier or have medical restrictions, it is our duty as Letter Carriers to inform management we must bring back mail, we are requesting the form upon return to the station.

Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services, Section 111.2 (J) states: “Issue form 1571 when carrier is instructed to curtail mail, indicating action thereon. Upon request, a duplicate of the form will be provided to the carrier.”

The supervisor *must* sign the form. Without a signature from a supervisor, the form is not valid or complete. The form should also indicate the action taken, whether it will be cased in the PM or held until the next day for casing and delivery. **Remember to request a copy for your records and your protection.**

The union has seen at the local, and regional level more Carriers being disciplined for “Delaying Mail” or other such charges. The easiest way to avoid a situation like this is to request and complete a PS Form 1571. This is a simple way to avoid facing discipline or even potential removal by simply filling out this form. It is our responsibility as Letter Carriers to communicate with management if we can’t complete delivery of all assigned mail.

When mentioning discipline from the recent past, I, personally, have seen at least one Notice of Removal, several Seven (7) Day Notice of Suspensions, and a couple Letters of Warning.

In addition to potentially receiving discipline for “Delay of Mail,” we could even face charges brought under the United States Code by the Office of Inspector General. Delaying mail is a Federal Offense punishable by fines or even potentially jail time. 18 United States Code 1703, states the following: “(a) Whoever, being a Postal Service officer or employee, unlawfully secretes, destroys, detains, delays, or opens any letter, postal card, package, bag, or mail entrusted to him or which shall come into his possession, and which was intended to be conveyed by mail, or carried or delivered by any carrier or other employee of the Postal Service, or forwarded through or delivered from any post office or station thereof established by authority of the Postmaster General or the Postal Service, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.”

Remember if — for whatever reason — you are instructed to curtail mail, or “manage your mail”, or need to bring back mail because you can’t finish all your deliveries, ensure you request PS Form 1571. Complete the form, ensure a supervisor signs the form, and request a copy of the form for your records. Protect yourself!

| U.S. Postal Service<br>UNDELIVERED MAIL REPORT   |                 |                 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Delivery Unit  | Route No.       | Date            |
| <b>TO: Delivery and Collection Superintendent</b>  |                 |                 |
| The Following Mail Distributed To Me For Delivery Was Left In This Office Or Returned Undelivered.                                 |                 |                 |
| NOTE: If mail left undelivered by carrier is later delivered on the same day, the manager should explain the action taken.         |                 |                 |
|  | Periodicals     | Office          |
| Letters  |                 |                 |
| Newspapers   |                 |                 |
| Magazines  |                 |                 |
| Flat   |                 |                 |
| Specials   |                 |                 |
| Other Pieces   |                 |                 |
| <b>For Use By Parcel Post Carrier Only</b>   |                 |                 |
| Parcel Post Distributed To Me For Delivery Was Left In The Office Or Returned Undelivered.   |                 |                 |
| Reason   | Continue Pieces |                 |
| Remarks: (Reassess the responsibility. Report all fines levied or avoided. Also give other matter of which record should be made.) |                 |                 |
| Post<br>Office   | Time of<br>Day  | Carrier<br>Type |
| Signature  |                 |                 |
| Action Taken (Manager):  |                 |                 |
| Manager's Signature  |                 | Date            |
| PS Form 1571, June 1988 (July 1977 edition obsolete)   |                 |                 |

Article courtesy of the Seattle, Washington October 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 79 *Seventy-Niner*

# Every single **Out there** cartoon is a self-contained article...

**"Out there"**



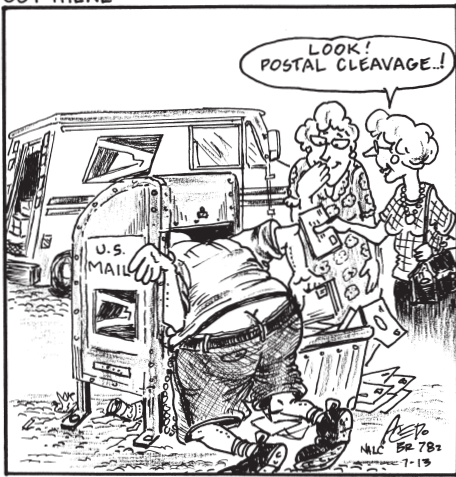
**"Out there"**



**"Out there"**



**OUT THERE**



**OUT THERE**



**"Out there"**



**OUT THERE**



## Non-Members as of September 2019

There are only 12 non-members in all of the cities we serve!

**Downtown Station**  
 Sarah Kirby  
 Javier Cruz  
 Jason Macknicki

**Camino Media**  
 100% UNION!!!  
**Arvin**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Mojave**  
 100% UNION!!!

**South Station**  
 Chanthorn Ped

**Avenal**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Ridgecrest**  
 Kelly Treat

**Brundage/East Bakersfield**  
 100% UNION!!!

**California City**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Shafter**  
 Laura M. New

**Hillcrest**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Delano**  
 Cynthia V. Quebral  
 Daniela Barreto

**Taft**  
 K. J. Kaczmarek

**Dole Court**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Edwards AFB**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Tehachapi**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Stockdale**  
 James Oh  
 Daniel Zuniga

**Lamont**  
 100% UNION!!!

**Trona**  
 100% UNION!!!

*CCA names are in italics*

If you have an idea for a cartoon, let Fred Acedo know. You may be surprised...  
 Contact him at P.O. Box 6532, Bakersfield, California 93386-6352

# Dicktation

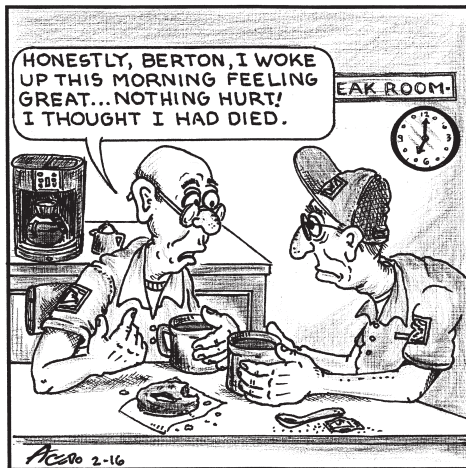
## OH MY ACHING ASS!!

By John "Cementhead" Dick,  
Branch 3126 Renaissance Man

As I drag my sixty year old body out of bed this morning those are the first words pounding through my head.

My back hurts, my knees hurt, my feet hurt, and even my ass hurts. But mostly my brain hurts.

### "Out tHeRe"



Originally published April 2016

job is what goes on right up here." I tap my forehead and hope that they remember this advice. The body only does what the mind tells it to.

We had one B I double itch of a week after this Veterans Day holiday. Nine to ten inches of heavy snow fell on the holiday. In early November we bypassed fall and went straight into winter. The plant also dumped an unbelievable amount of mail on us; much of it unworked letters that had to be cased the old fashioned way.

Armed with a full set of house-to-house and a hamper of parcels, I leave the post office parking lot to begin my adventure. That is what it feels like on these days — an adventure, a test of fortitude.

In Royal Oak, we all have walking routes. Leaves are

still on the trees and I am trudging through this snow and ice trying to recall my own advice. The body only does what the mind tells it to. I focus on the task at hand and somehow, amazingly, I deliver the mail to the last house. I go home, tired and somewhat battered.

*The next day I awake to do it all over again. And the next day, the next day, and the next day, and...*

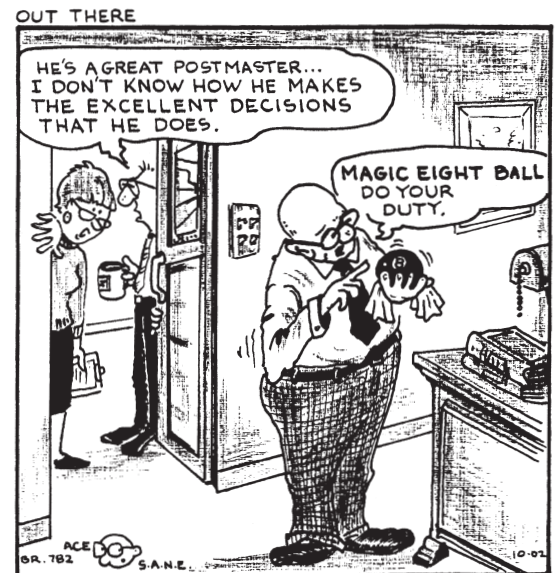
THIS is the story of every Letter Carrier at my station this week who reported to work after this unexpected fall/winter storm. Overtime was forced every day this week, and every Carrier worked 10-12 hours every day to get the mail out.

*For those of you in other stations with mounted routes, I am sure this week was no joy ride as well. That right arm gets really cold!*

All joking aside, whether you have a walking or mounted route you are to be commended for your dedication and service this week. Your mind made your body do the things it didn't want to do. You have that Letter Carrier spirit!

The other mental challenge of being a Letter Carrier is dealing with Postal management, more appropriately, mismanagement.

Whether active or retired, if you get a group of Letter Carriers together, tales of inept supervision will fill the room. The stories are funny and sad, sometimes at the same time.



Originally published February 2003

I have been lucky at the Royal Oak station. For the most part, my career has been blessed with reasonable and decent managers. I firmly believe that it is because of the strong Union presence in Royal Oak. We sometimes have to train them to be good supervisors.

When we get that new supervisor who wants to lift their leg to mark their territory, our Union folks unite to get them potty-trained. Every Steward in my office works together and as Branch President Paul Roznowski tells us, *“Never give up and never cry uncle.”*

We have a problem office in our Branch and it goes by the name of Farmington Hills. The station is run by a postmaster named Jeff Price. Mr. Price has a history of working in Labor Relations in the Detroit District, and he has no problem telling anyone who will listen that he knows the contract inside and out.

I have been assigned most of this year to assist the Farmington Stewards in dealing with Mr. Price’s antics. He, quite frankly, can exhaust you with his beligerence and vocabulary semantics. Put simply, he is a bully. **AND I DON’T LIKE BULLIES.**

Some people bully you with their fists and some folks bully you with their words and actions. Mr. Price is the king of the latter. “I bargain in good faith,” means we are going to do it my way. “I go by the contract,” means I am going to do it my way. “I have no problem working with the Union,” means as long as they agree to do it my way. He is the smartest guy in the room and he will remind you of that if you question him. Apparently, his superiors feel the same way about him.

Thankfully, we have a Contract and a grievance process to deal with management bullies. Hundreds of grievances have been filed by the Union this year with most of them being appealed to the Step B Team for resolution. The grievances that I have assisted in filing in Farmington concern overtime violations. **SO FAR, THESE OVERTIME VIOLATIONS HAVE COST THE POSTAL SERVICE CLOSE TO \$80,000 AND WE HAVE MORE COMING.**

That \$80,000 is just the payouts to the affected Carriers and is not counting all the other costs of appeal-

OUT THERE



Originally published October 2007

ing dozens of grievances to the Step B Team. At what point do we get the attention of higher management concerning the antics being played by postmaster Price? **Another \$80,000?** Their silence on this implies that higher management condones this egregious behavior.

The Union will keep the grievance machine moving as long as there are violations. The contract and our mindful willingness to enforce it is our only weapon when fighting a bully. And I promise you, *“We will never give up and we will never cry uncle!”*

P.S. It is well known that if you are dedicated to doing the good work of the Union you will spend many hours off the clock and away from home doing what I consider God’s work. As Stewards and Union officials we sacrifice our valuable time away from family and friends to insure that our membership gets the best representation possible and that our Branch 3126 is operated in a responsible manner.

With the Holiday Season upon us, I would like to recognize the sacrifice that our families make so that we all can do this important work. Without the support of our wives, partners, family, and friends this great Union would not survive. Their love and support is the glue that holds this organization together. They sacrifice the same valuable time that we Union officers do when we are away from them. It is time that we can never get back.

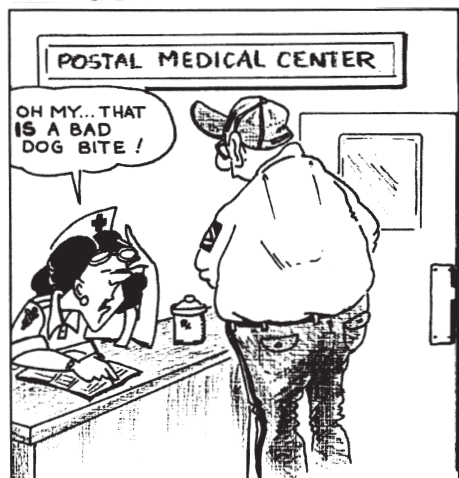
I especially want to thank my wife Jackie, a retired Letter Carrier, for being patient with my late nights at the office. You are my rock! Hopefully, I will make it up to you one day.

Article courtesy of the December 2019  
Madison Heights, Michigan NALC Branch 3126 *NEW VISION*

# “Don’t let a dog ruin your day, or worse.”

By Gary Summers,  
NALC Branch 1707  
Shop Steward

OUT THERE



Originally published in 1999

Don’t assume that a dog you’ve seen before on your route — even one that is generally friendly — won’t change its mind and feel threatened by your approach.

“Man’s best friend can be a Letter Carrier’s enemy in a heartbeat,” Manuel L. Peralta our NALC Director of Safety and Health said. “Even a dog that appears friendly, or has been friendly in the past, or one whose owner says doesn’t bite, should be treated with caution. Don’t judge them by the breed either, because any kind of dog can attack, and even a small dog can injure you.”

Don’t assume a barrier will keep a dog from reaching you. Dogs can jump fences, as Choi found out the hard way, break through screens, and even crash right through glass windows and doors when attacking Letter Carriers.

“Dogs are more likely to bite when you aren’t looking—so keep your attention on any dog as long as you can,” Peralta added. “If a dog is asleep or doesn’t see you, don’t startle the dog, but do make a gentle noise or call its name, if you know it. Don’t reach out your hand to pet it—that could become the hand that’s bitten.”

If a dog does attack, stand your ground.

Turning your back or running will likely only encourage it; and you could be injured by falling, not to mention become more vulnerable to the dog.

Use your satchel or a package between your body and the dog, and use dog repellent spray if possible.

Have the spray in hand if you are coming close to a dog. Make sure every morning that you have a can of spray with you and that it hasn’t expired.

*If you encounter a dog on your route that appears to be a threat, be sure to put a dog warning card in your case to remind yourself and to warn other carriers on the route.*

When a patron who owns a threatening dog moves, many Carriers forward the card to the station at the new address to warn Carriers.

If a dog is such a threat that the mail can’t be delivered without serious risk, tell your supervisors—the Postal Service can suspend mail delivery to any address where there is danger to a carrier.

Peralta urged any Carrier bitten by a dog to seek immediate treatment, even if the bite is minor, because of the risk of infection.

“A Letter Carrier’s job is hard enough,” NALC President Rolando said. “Don’t let a dog ruin your day, or worse.”

For more information, see USPS Publication 174, “How to Avoid Dog Bites.”

OUT THERE



Originally published August 2005

**By all means: Safety comes 1st before anything else!  
Make it your lifestyle!**

Article courtesy of the Hayward, California  
October - November NALC  
Branch 1707 ZIPPER

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

December 31, 2019

### Houston letter carrier shot on his route

NALC is saddened to learn that letter carrier Adrian Jackson, a member of Branch 283 in Houston, Texas, was shot multiple times on his route December 28. Jackson is currently hospitalized in stable condition. Authorities have classified it as a random shooting and a suspect has been apprehended. Jackson, a 5 year letter carrier, is currently assigned to Longpoint Station in Houston.

“We are saddened by the news that Brother Jackson was shot in a random, senseless act of violence while serving his customers. He and his family are in our thoughts and prayers as he continues to fight and recover from his injuries.” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

Source — <https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/houston-letter-carrier-shot-on-his-route>



# Vehicle Fires!!!

By Manuel L. Peralta, NALC Director of Safety and Health

Over the last decade, we have experienced hundreds of vehicle fires. In September of 2019, NALC requested a breakout of the number of recent vehicle fires involving City Letter Carriers. USPS's response, released in October 2019, indicates that we have experienced 377 LLV Fires, 36 FFV fires and surprisingly, *five ProMaster fires within the last five years*. The ProMaster fires were all within the last two years.

In September 2019, LLV 3314535 was involved in a fire. The report determined that the point of origin for the fire was the dashboard area. Sadly, this vehicle was a loaner from the vehicle maintenance facility and should have been in tip-top shape if it was being serviced properly.

In the same month, LLV 0205495 also was involved in a fire. The report determined that the causation scenario included the ignition of escaping fuel and/or vapors out of the throttle body injection unit by an ignition source. In that investigation, the

Carrier reported having "...shut the truck off. Heard a pop noise come from the engine...didn't think anything of it...delivered a parcel...tried to start it three times...smoke started to come from the dashboard... saw flames coming from the engine..."

The number of city delivery vehicle fires listed above includes 77 LLV fires in Fiscal Year 2019. Despite all efforts by NALC to encourage every letter carrier to inspect his or her assigned vehicle every single day, we know that it is not happening. *The National Agreement, through the M-41, provides time for each and every one of you to conduct a vehicle inspection every morning.* The purpose is for you to pay close attention to the condition of your vehicle, checking for any leaks and reporting any conditions that you believe to be a hazard. Your opinion counts and what you report must be addressed. If it is not, please see your shop steward.

This abridged/modified portion of an article is courtesy of the January 2020 NALC Postal Record. The complete article can be found on page 27. **Read the entire message from "Manny"!**

## Safety Tip

As daylight savings time ends and we "fall back" to shorter days, we will spend more time driving after dark both on and off the job. Night driving is more dangerous than at any other time of day. **Research shows that the risk of a fatality from a crash is three times greater at night.** Depth perception and your peripheral vision can be compromised and the glare from oncoming headlights can be blinding. You can also experience limited visibility even when you use your high-beam headlights. This creates less reaction time to obstacles/hazards in the roadway.

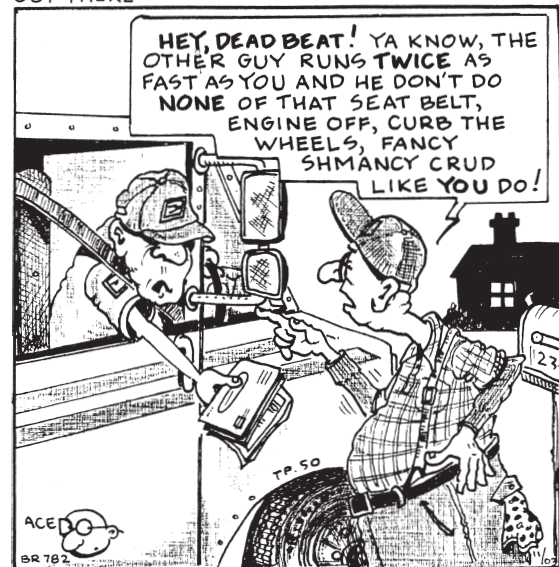
Here are some tips from the National Safety Council to help keep you safe on the roadway.

- Always practice defensive driving techniques.
- Reduce your speed accordingly.
- Minimize distractions such as cell phones.
- Ensure your headlights and tail lights are clean.
- Dim your dashboard.
- Look away from oncoming lights.
- If you wear glasses, be sure the lenses are anti-reflective.
- Keep your windshield clean and streak free.
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility.
- Allow for reduced stopping time.
- Driving during evening rush hour can be especially hazardous especially in winter so use extra caution when returning to the office or heading home after work.
- As we age, we may have greater difficulty seeing at night so be sure to have regular eye exams.

Fatigue is another big risk. This can be caused from lack of quality sleep, long work hours, and sleep disorders. This puts everyone on the road at risk! Drowsy drivers are three times as likely to have a crash if driving while fatigued. Be sure to get 7-9 hours of sleep each night, stop every two hours to rest or take a nap if you need to, and travel during times that you would normally be awake.

Article courtesy of the Duluth, Minnesota November 2019 issue of the NALC Branch 114 ZENITH BRANCH NEWS

OUT THERE



Originally published February 2005

# Why We Have What We Have

By Dave Skowronek, Branch 2 Vice President

In last month's *Pioneer* President Kania started his article with a call out to all the members who took part in the 1970 postal strike. He asked them to contact the branch office to help in compiling a list of the members from our branch who took part in the strike and, in turn, gave us what we now take for granted — that is, a good middle-class job. You see, they risked all they had, not just for themselves, but for all future Letter Carriers.

Since that article the office has received dozens of phone calls, and some letters, giving us an opportunity to compile a list of these great Letter Carriers. I have had the honor of talking with many of them as they responded, and what they tell me is truly a living account of our history.

One retiree told me how they were picketing outside the office and people would heckle them. They were called traitors and communists, simply for wanting to improve the working conditions they had. This carrier paused while he talked with me and stated that he, and approximately 90% of his coworkers, were veterans and how they resented the comments hurled at them. It didn't deter them at all though.

Another retiree told me he and his buddy were picketing at their office when a car rode by them slowly. When it passed, they saw it was a government car (law enforcement, FBI). They were, after all, breaking the law.

They weren't deterred and continued to stay out. Who amongst us today would risk incarceration to protect and improve our working conditions? Did you raise your hand?

Another Carrier told me that he was afraid to go out on strike. He was six years into his career and had a wife and 3 young kids depending on him. He prayed and followed his gut, and today at the age of 83 he is comfortably retired because he took the chance to improve our job. He did the right thing, for him, his family, and ultimately you.

How many of us would risk this job, even break the law to improve it? Not just for yourselves, but for the betterment of all Carriers today and in the future? I don't really know how many would. All of the strikers I have spoken with share an immense pride in what they did, and have also stated that they don't regret going out.

One thing they all conveyed was a certain disdain for those who did not join them. I wish that today we had a dislike for those who don't join us. Unfortunately, today we just accept them, even socialize with them, even though we carry the load for them. Today too many of us take what we have as a right, something we deserve, just for coming to work.

Recently a carrier left our union. Someone I know. I asked them why? The Carrier stated that with a newborn they needed the \$60 a month to pay for child care. Never mind they wouldn't have anything without the negotiated agreement the NALC has attained in the last 50 years.

The Carrier also said to me, "Yeah well, what's the difference anyways? I'm still represented right?" I did not respond. I'm sure you know why.

What if the folks 50 years ago had that attitude? Someone heckled and demeaned

me. Someone will put me in jail. My family could lose everything. Thank God they didn't. We all owe so much to the strikers. They did it not only for their betterment, but for YOURS.

**What can Carriers today do? A few things.**

Appreciate what we have, and how we attained it. YOUR contractual rights, pay and benefits are not bestowed on you from a benevolent, appreciative employer. They have been solely attained by the efforts of the NALC. Support the Letter Carriers Political Fund (LCPF). The Congress that gave us the right to negotiate our pay, benefits and working conditions can, with a stroke of a pen, take them away. Support the NALC, not only with your membership, but also your participation. Many hands make for light work.

So, find a way to help the Branch make things better for all. Attend a meeting, volunteer for an event, help with the giving tree program, become a Steward... *Just find some way to help the entire membership, and in turn help yourself.*

I remember Vince Sombrotto and had the pleasure of meeting him. He was a major player in the strike who went on to be a great national president of the NALC.

He's isn't with us anymore, but many of our strikers are.

I am honored to know them, and call them my brothers and sisters, as well as my friends. Take the time at a meeting or branch function to meet them, thank them, and appreciate them.

***Lastly, Thanks to the members in 1970! Without you, we would not have a thing.***

Article courtesy of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin October 2019 NALC Branch 2 *Pioneer*

**There will be a special gathering of veterans from the 1970 Postal Strike in mid-March 2020 in New York City. For info, contact NALC at (202) 393-4695.**

# Reaching out to our injured workers



Assistant to the President  
for Workers' Compensation  
Kevin Card

**I**njured workers have few friends. The minute you report an injury, many of your colleagues seem to fall off the map. You can be a great letter carrier, loved and respected by managers and fellow workers, but the minute you suffer and report an injury, you may be abandoned by those who you know so well.

**The reasons for this are obvious** to most letter carriers. Supervisors abandon you because a recordable injury increases their workload and requires them to fill out forms that are foreign to most of management.

Then, there's your now-vacant route that has to be covered.

And that's when your co-workers may abandon you. Perhaps the ODLers and CCAs will be happy to cover your route, but for some, it's a different story. Instead of having their long weekend off to attend a child's sporting event, they now have to come in and carry your route.

And then there's your family. Suffering a workplace injury means no more overtime. No more Saturday evenings out for dinner and a movie, as you all adapt to the economics of the injured. You're suddenly homebound, interrupting the daily routine of your spouse or family. Adjusting to this new reality can be stressful for all.

**Why does our species act this way? Is it genetic—do our genes tell us to abandon the weakest few for the survival of the many?**

Or is there a lingering doubt as to the authenticity of your injury, reinforced by the media? There is a well-known term to explain what gets reported in the press—if it bleeds, it leads. Some news outlets seem to revel in reporting on the injured worker found bowling, hiking or (God forbid) taking a vacation. As if people with disabilities should be prevented from attempting to have a good life, despite their now-altered existence.

Many years ago, I had a seriously injured co-worker who went from friend to foe because the NALC could not stop agents of the Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) from following her day and night. Whether we like it or not, the OIG has the right to investigate just about anyone, at any time. I greatly miss my former friend's good-natured laughter and *joie de vivre*. Some things are irreplaceable.

**There is a meanness in this world that was absent from the country I grew up in—a country founded on principles of justice and compassion.**

In his book *The Unknown Shore*, the late Patrick O'Brien writes about a crew on an 18th-century frigate that's sinking off the coast of South America. The ship's crew members take some solace in the fact that they were swimming toward the shore of a country whose values included

charity and compassion, something they dearly needed. Injured workers need fellow workers who can offer the same compassion in their moment of greatest need.

**How do we letter carriers change the culture of abandonment?**

We can start by improving the atmosphere on the workroom floor. Just as no two routes are the same, so it is for your fellow letter carriers.

While the Postal Service may expect every letter carrier to work exactly like another, the reality of humanity is that we are all different. Different in size, shapes and abilities. The Postal Service tends to ignore the reality of our mutual differences and commands uniformity in our workplace performance. What a silly idea.

Compassion begins in our hearts. Learning to revel in our differences and embrace our fellow workers, warts and all, is a conscious step that can revitalize our workplaces. We all should be proud to point a finger, not at each other, but at all of us and the collective effort we make daily to get all of the letters, magazines and parcels delivered, seven days a week.

Your fellow worker who suffers an injury needs your help, too. A letter carrier who is injured and unable to work is faces unique challenges compared to workers in other professions. Letter carriers are part of the community. Shearing the bonds we have with co-workers and customers can be an injury itself.

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**“We all win when we believe that an injury to one is an injury to all, and respond with compassion and respect.”**

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**We letter carriers are and can be different than this.** One of our fellow letter carriers was recently injured in a horrible accident, nearly losing his legs. The accident was recorded on a security camera and went viral over the internet. Letters of compassion to the injured letter carrier poured in from his co-workers and NALC branches across the country. What a wonderful response. I applaud all of those who reached out to this letter carrier.

That carrier is not alone. Letter carriers filed 26,296 injury claims in Fiscal Year 2019 (Oct. 1, 2018, to Sept. 31, 2019). All of those injured letter carriers deserve our compassion and support.

Reaching out to your injured co-workers individually, as an office or as a branch, is a positive step we can and should take. We all win when we all believe that an injury to one is an injury to all, and when we respond with compassion and respect. It is what makes our union great.

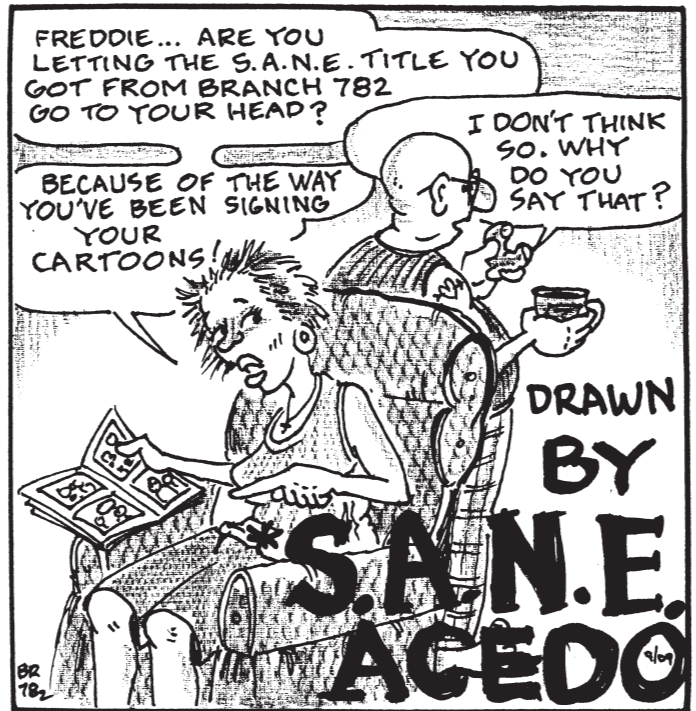
Article courtesy of the December 2019 *Postal Record*



# 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 make check payable to Basil Zuniga, Branch 782 Editor-guy** •

**Please include \$7.90 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.

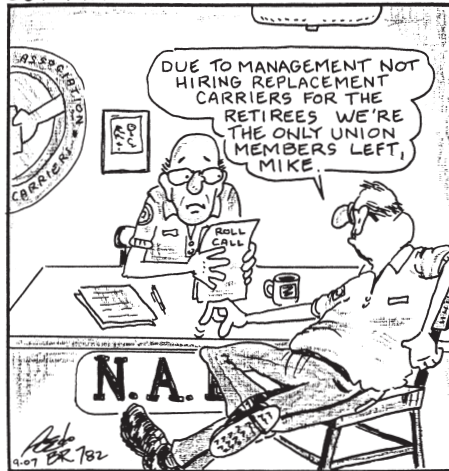
This is a sample. You are looking at page 74 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016...

OUT THERE



Originally published April 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published April 2009

OUT THERE



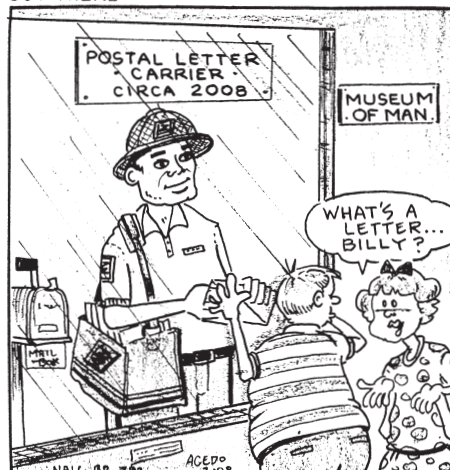
Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

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Originally published May 2009

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Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

OUT THERE



Originally published May 2009

# 14th Annual



## BATTLE OF THE STATIONS

**AT ~ SOUTHWEST LANES** 3610 WIBLE ROAD, BAKERSFIELD, CA  
**WHEN ~ FEBRUARY 16TH, 2020** check in 10 AM / start 11 AM  
**SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO~ ALFREDO VELASCO t2 maintenance**  
**6325 Declaration Way 93313 661-204-5421**

1: Team name 2: First & Last name in bowling order

**\$100 DOLLARS**  
**PER TEAM**  
**LANES ARE**  
**LIMITED!!!**

**FIRST TO PAY ~**  
**FIRST TO PLAY**

**DEADLINE ~**  
**FEBRUARY 12,**  
**2020**

### Categories

There will be 3 categories, Men, Women, and Co-Ed. Awards will be presented to the top team from each category. There will be awards for Top Individual, Female, and Male, bowler.

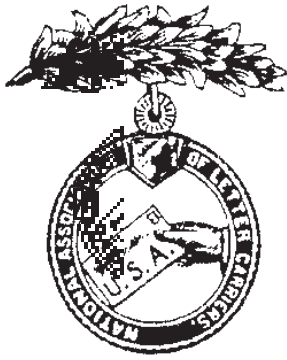
### Rules

Each station must have at least 2 teams to qualify for Top Station award.

Team must consist of 3 of 4 players from that station(includes retirees) Top 2 scoring teams from that station will be used. The more teams you have the better chance you have to win.

PREVIOUS WINNERS 2019 GMF -2018 DOLE-2017 DOLE-2016 CAMINO

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| <b>Vice-President</b>      | <b>John Ortega</b>      | <b>(661) 809-8140</b> |
| <b>Recording Secretary</b> | <b>Kim Gerdes</b>       | <b>(661) 301-9676</b> |
| <b>Treasurer</b>           | <b>Molly Biggar</b>     | <b>(661) 832-0393</b> |
| <b>Financial Secretary</b> | <b>Anita Holderman</b>  | <b>(661) 487-5353</b> |
| <b>HBP &amp; MBA Rep.</b>  | <b>Mark Ramirez</b>     | <b>(661) 398-6075</b> |
| <b>Sargeant-at-Arms</b>    | <b>David Treto</b>      | <b>(661) 865-8922</b> |
| <b>Chief Trustee</b>       | <b>Teresa Ortega</b>    | <b>(661) 391-8026</b> |
| <b>Trustee</b>             | <b>Paul Salazar</b>     | <b>(661) 303-3603</b> |
| <b>Trustee</b>             | <b>Darryl Holderman</b> | <b>(661) 332-9201</b> |

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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.**

Basil Zuniga, Ex-Editor-guy  
(C) (661) 205-1603  
e-mail: brzii@aol.com

Paul Greenfield, Assistant Editor  
(C) (661) 203-7802

The "S.A.N.E."\*  
Fred Acedo, Cartoonist  
\*(Special Assistant Newsletter Editor)  
P.O. Box 6532  
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532  
e-mail: outthere5150@yahoo.com

Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer  
Dholderman@bak.rr.com

## NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

|                              |                  |                |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Arvin (93203)                | Mike Munoz       | (661) 304-5516 |
| Avenal (93204)               | John Ortega      | (661) 809-8140 |
| Delano (93215)               | Vacant           | (661) 331-9171 |
| Lamont (93241)               | Mike Munoz       | (661) 304-5516 |
| McFarland (93250)            | Fernando Soto    | (661) 331-9171 |
| Shafter (93263)              | Norma Hamer      | (661) 619-1465 |
| Taft (93268)                 | Mike Meza        | (805) 625-4541 |
| Wasco (93280)                | Norma Hamer      | (661) 619-1465 |
| Downtown Station (93301)     | Teresa Ortega    | (661) 391-8026 |
| South Station (93304)        | Mike Meza        | (805) 625-4541 |
| South Station Alternate      | Judy Kiyoshi     | (661) 817-5529 |
| East Bakersfield (93305)     | Paul Salazar     | (661) 303-3603 |
| East Bakersfield (Alternate) | Ryan Woommavovah | (661) 331-9171 |
| Hillcrest Station (93306)    | Mike Meza        | (805) 625-4541 |
| Brundage Station (93307)     | John Ortega      | (661) 809-8140 |
| Dole Court (93308)           | Shari Sharp      | (661) 364-5544 |
| Dole Court (93308)           | Denise Ream      | (661) 304-6625 |
| Dole Court (Alternate)       | David Treto      | (661) 865-8922 |
| Stockdale Station (93309)    | Randy Courson    | (661) 345-0256 |
| Stockdale Station (93309)    | Maria Valenzuela | (661) 496-5929 |
| Camino Media (93311/13)      | Mike Meza        | (805) 625-4541 |
| Camino Media (Alternate)     | Paul Salazar     | (661) 303-3603 |
| Mojave (93501)               | Delga Loza       | (661) 824-8332 |
| California City (93504)      | Ryan Gerstl      | (761) 373-4180 |
| Boron (93516)                | Paula Hogg       | (760) 373-8963 |
| Edwards AF Base (93523)      | Vacant           | (661) 331-9171 |
| Ridgecrest (93555)           | Lynnel Howell    | (760) 382-3030 |
| Tehachapi (93561)            | Vacant           | (661) 331-9171 |
| Trona (93562)                | Lynnel Howell    | (760) 382-3030 |

|                            |                   |                |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| OWCP Representative        | Rick Gerdes       | (661) 301-9675 |
| CCA Representative         | Gilroy Manglicmot | (661) 301-2156 |
| USPS Social Recreation Rep | Paul Greenfield   | (661) 203-7802 |

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

**Rick Plummer, Webmaster**





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# General Meeting Wednesday January 22, 2020 7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office  
 2628 "F" Street  
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**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Be advised: 2020 - 2023 NALC Branch 782 Officers to be officially installed at our regularly scheduled General Meeting by NALC National Officer Dan Toth on January 22, 2020**

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

***YOU***

**to come to our monthly Meeting\***

*Last month, Deborah Wiles could have won \$500!*

***YOU could win \$500 this month!!!***

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

"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



"OuT tHeRe"



**Want a 32 page web version? E-mail a request to the Editor-guy at [brziii@aol.com](mailto:brziii@aol.com)**