

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

### E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN  
CALIFORNIA CITY  
McFARLAND  
TAFT

AVENAL  
DELANO  
MOJAVE  
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST  
TRONA

BORON  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
WASCO



**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891**

NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2014

at the  
**Mike:**



As I start the new term as President, I would like to thank my wife Diana for all her patience and understanding for the last 28 years.

During those twenty-eight years of being an NALC activist, I have spent countless hours in the evenings, days off, holidays and Sundays working on union issues. Without her support I could have not done it. I know she sometimes feels like she is a “union widow”.

Also, I also want to thank NALC National Director of Safety and Health, Manny Peralta, for attending our January meeting and installing the Branch officers. It was both an honor and pleasure to have him attend the meeting.

I first met Manny over 25 years ago when he was a Regional Administrative Assistant (RAA) for the Region 1 Business Agent. I was a new Shop Steward and made many, many, many phone calls to Manny with questions about the National Contract. There was not a single time that he did not take the time to answer my questions and help in any way he could. It was also my privilege to sit in many arbitrations over the years where Manny was the NALC advocate for our Branch and I was totally in awe of his knowledge and his incredible memory.



Manny Peralta administering the oath of office to NALC Branch President Mike Towery.

Dale Hart was our Business Agent at the time. He later became NALC Director of City Delivery. The two others RAAs with Manny in Dale’s office were Joan Hurst and Al Apfelbaum.

*Continued on next page...*



All three of them were also extremely patient and understanding when I would phone them with my seemingly endless questions.

I felt fortunate that I was able to learn from the best.

I also want to thank our current Business Agent, Chris Jackson and his Regional Administrative Assistants Bryant Almario and Brian Voight for all their support over the years. They are always there when I need their help or just need to vent.



2014 - 2017 NALC Branch 782 Executive Board (l-r): John Oregate, Vice-President; Kim Gerdes, Recording Secretary; Anita Holderman, Financial Secretary, Mark Ramirez NALC HBP and MBA Representative; Molly Biggar, Treasurer; Jerry Patterson, Sargeant-at-Arms; Frank Martinez, Trustee; Teresa Oregate, Chief Trustee; Darryl Holderman, Trustee; and, Mike Towery, President.

It has also been an honor and a privilege to work with all the members of the NALC Branch 782 Executive Board, Shop Stewards and other appointed representatives of the Branch. Some of them have been actively involved with the union for 25 years or longer. Every one of them work many hours and are dedicated to making our Branch better and I truly thank them for all the loyalty, support and assistance they have given me over the last seven years as Branch 782 President and during those years when I was Vice President. Every one of them contribute their talents in making Branch 782 function and they are an integral part of making me a more effective elected representative for all of you!

***However, the Union is all of us...not just the President, the Executive Board or the Shop Stewards.***

Unionism is binding all of us together for the good of the whole. There will come a time that the current Branch 782 Officers and Shop Stewards will be gone— for one reason or another—and it will be necessary for others to step up and take over.



I would like to congratulate Mike Copeland for his retirement at the end of January. He had talked about it for years and finally decided to retire a month earlier than he had planned. Anyone that knows him will understand when I state, "He will not have any difficulty finding enough things to keep him busy..." He definitely will be missed!

As I offer my congratulations to Mike Copeland, I want you to consider an issue raised by NALC President Fred Rolando in the "President's Message" which was featured in the February 2014 *NALC POSTAL RECORD*. It can be easy to take for granted benefits Letter Carriers *NEVER* had before the National Association of Letter Carriers made them a priority...

I also want to congratulate Lynda LaForce who was installed on February 12th as the first female Postmaster of Bakersfield. I have worked with her for about 30 years and wish her all the best. She worked as a Carrier in Bakersfield and is definitely familiar with this city.

I think everyone would agree that the next few years for the Postal Service are going to be very challenging. I have hope for the future as I see new faces at our meetings and see folks who volunteer to work on projects which will better our lives. I urge *EACH* CCA to become involved! Make a difference!! Really!!!

MIKE TOWERY  
NALC Branch 782 President

*"...When our Union was founded in 1889, the idea of retirement barely existed, at least for working-class people. People worked virtually every day of their adult lives and rarely had the chance to enjoy a period of relaxation as a reward for decades of labor. It would take almost 30 years of hard work by NALC and other labor organizations to convince Congress to create the Civil Service Retirement System and, 15 years after that, to create Social Security. In 1889, only the rich could dream of a day when they could rest and enjoy living without the need to work to survive..."*

Fredric V. Rolando, NALC President  
February 2014 *Postal Record*



Just in case you ever wondered how your newsletter got to you... It is prepared for mailing as it is folded, stapled, labelled, counted, bundled, and rubber banded by Branch 782 Letter Carriers and their family members. On a rotating basis, the task is accomplished by different units and by others who like to show up *each* month. We enjoy the work, each other, and the pizza!!!

These pictures are from Hillcrest Carriers in February 2014.

# Johnny on the Spot



**O**n Feb. 7, 2014, the U.S. Postal Service released its financial report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2014, which covers the last three months of 2013.



Here is NALC President Fredric Rolando's statement about the report:

"Today's Postal

Service figures for the first quarter of 2014 are highly encouraging and show why the postal network must be maintained and strengthened, not degraded.

The announced operating profit of \$765 million for the first quarter is dramatic in itself—and it continues the operating profitability that began last year.

The Postal Service's unmatched networks and outstanding employees have made these striking results possible. And these trends fair well for the future, because they reflect the opportunities increasingly presented by the Internet and by an improving economy. Package revenues resulting from online shopping rose by more than 14 percent this quarter—more than

offsetting the small decline in letter revenue.

This quarter's \$765 million operating profit compares with the \$100 million from the first quarter of 2013—another sign of improving postal finances.

In light of these results, lawmakers should strengthen the postal network while addressing the remaining problem: the congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree benefits, required of no other public or private entity in the country. Degrading the network and reducing ser-

vices to the public and businesses would jeopardize the postal turnaround.

Meanwhile on the Hill, The Senate committee with Postal Service oversight, the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, finished on Feb. 6 its mark-up of the modified Carper-Coburn postal bill, S. 1486, and passed the measure by a vote of 9 to 1.

As written, S. 1486 would facilitate the end of door delivery and the elimination of Saturday delivery, therefore destroying tens of thousands of letter carrier jobs.

It also would endanger all postal jobs by slowing service and driving business

away from the Postal Service. As of the writing of this article the Senate has not scheduled a date for this Bill to be taken to the floor. While the Senate Committee perceives that this Bill will restore the Postal service it actually will degrade it.

Unnecessary and damaging attacks on the Postal Service's vital networks and its employees included in S. 1486—would only send the USPS on a downward trajectory.

In restoring financial stability to the USPS, it is critical to remember this fact: The Postal Service is now running an operating profit—\$623 million last year and \$1.1 billion projected by USPS for this year—and so it makes no sense to degrade the networks and employees responsible for this profit. The congressional mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits, required of no other business or agency, accounts for 100 percent of the red ink.

Paving the way for eliminating six-day delivery and door-to-door service would hurt millions of residents and small businesses as well as the Postal Service itself, because it would slow service, drive mail out of the system and reduce the earned revenue that funds USPS.

The postal turnaround is being driven by an improving economy and online shopping that has sent package revenues to record highs. Lawmakers should not stop the resulting postal comeback in its tracks by needlessly degrading the networks and reducing the services that are making the USPS operationally profitable. That is the fatal flaw in S. 1486. We have a voice on the Hill and COLCPE makes it possible. Please think about becoming a COLCPE member, our future depends on it. Your donation can be any amount. Come to a meeting to find out how to sign up

JOHN ORTEGA  
NALC Branch 782 Vice-President



John Orettega welcomes Nickolas Martinez into NALC membership.

# Join the NALC e-Activist Network



Sign up with the NALC e-Activist Network to receive periodic e-mail action alerts and information on issues important to NALC members.

## FOR NALC MEMBERS ONLY

PLEASE HAND COMPLETED FORM BACK TO YOUR SHOP STEWARD/OFFICER OR MAIL TO NALC STATE OFFICE, 1523 ROLLINS RD., BURLINGAME, CA 94010.

Use this form to SIGN UP, UPDATE, or CHANGE your e-mail address

### e-Activist Network sign-up form \* Required

First Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_.com

Phone number (or Cell) - The best number to reach you. (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Check box here if you would like to receive text-message alerts. (Optional)

### We need your address to help us verify your NALC membership

Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

City \* \_\_\_\_\_ State CA ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

*5-digit ZIP Code Please*

NALC Branch Number \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Record number \_\_\_\_\_

This nine-digit number can be found on your copy of The Postal Record magazine. Look on the back cover of any magazine—it's the number in the upper left-hand corner of your mailing address. It is very important that you provide us this number if you can.

# Minutes of the January 2014 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 28th day of January, 2014 at the Branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The stewards were present from Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, Hillcrest, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present were Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; S.A.N.E. Fred Acedo; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; Legislative Representative Diana Herrera, and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the December 17, 2013 were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** An application was received from Denise Blair, Jorge Mendez, Nickolas Martinez, Carson Ramirez, Caleb Andrade, Richard Vanderlip, Nicole Gallagher and Vanessa Zuspan.

President Mike Towery introduced Manny Peralta, National Director of Safety and Health, who installed the Branch Officers. Mr. Peralta discussed Senate Bill 1486 which the NALC opposes. He suggested that members go to NALC website to keep informed on legislative issues and information important to Carriers.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Teresa Ortega did not have anything to report regarding the picnic. Basil Zuniga reported that he was not here for the folding, but Pam Smith brought a lot of people from Hillcrest, and Anita Holderman reported that the folding went quickly. Next month will be Brundage/East Bakersfield's turn. Basil discussed the problems with the newsletter last month. He had problems with the computer and printer. Frank Martinez reported that there has not been any meeting of the Social and Recreation Committee. Kim Gerdes reported that there were no book sales this month. MBS/HBP Representative Mark Ramirez gave members of the NALC Plan a printout with 24-hour nurse and pharmacy numbers and which doctors are covered by the plan. He discussed how much money could be saved by using the NALC doctors. Basil Zuniga reported that the NALC is the first Federal Health Benefit Plan and that it is a non-profit.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Mike Towery appointed Teresa Ortega to the By-Laws Committee.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery reported that Steward Lynnell Howell is still recovering from a broken leg and sprained ankle. She had a good experience with her OWCP representative. Fred Acedo brought a CD that he received from retired Carrier Peter Berton. He played the CD which contained an original song about letter carriers.



**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that the revised income for September is \$12,108.09.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Biggar will make her report next month.

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

The General Meeting Drawing for \$300.00 would have been won by retiree Connie White if he had been present.

There were 45 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

KIM GERDES  
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

*If we all don't stick together now, there's going to be no one left to blame... We ALL should be Carriers in a Common Cause. Really? YES!!*

## NON-MEMBER LIST\* February 2014

### Downtown Station

Sarah Kirby  
Javier Cruz

### South Station

**100% UNION!!!**

### Brundage/East Bakersfield

David Kinglee

### Hillcrest

**100% UNION!!!**

### Dole Court

Dana Morris  
Sharon Hancock

### Stockdale

James Oh  
Marty Martinez

### Camino Media

Christopher Rodriguez

### Arvin

**100% UNION!!!**

### Avenal

*Brent Howard*

### California City

*Stephen Ivory*

### Delano

L.A. Campos  
C.V. Quebral  
*R.C. Saldana II*

### Lamont

*Erik Gonzalez*  
*M.S. Johnston*  
*D. Rivera, Jr.*

### Ridgecrest

R. P. Zurn  
S. P. Pierce  
GD Weaver  
*Bonnie Leroy*  
H. G. Blanco  
*Christina Celaya*

### Shafter

M. D. Voights  
L. M. New

### Taft

*Ashley Veach*  
*Alicia Rodriguez*  
B. M. Krier  
K. J. Hughes  
*Terra Bullard*

### Tehachapi

*TR Landis*  
*B.C. Den Beeman*

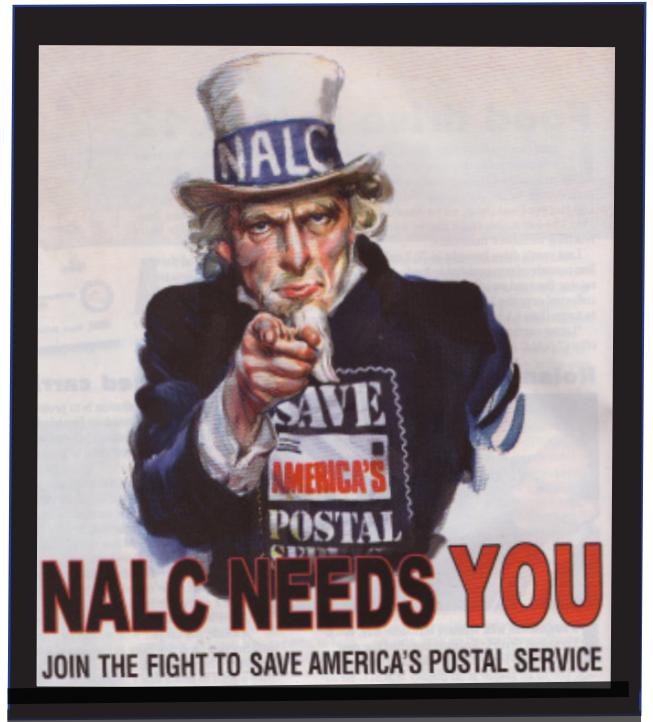
### Trona

*William Campbell*

### Wasco

**100% UNION!!!**

\*CCA names are in Italics



**We are an "Open Shop".  
MEMBERSHIP IS VOLUNTARY.  
400 Letter Carriers are in the  
complement assigned to cities  
represented by our Branch.  
32 ARE NON-MEMBERS\*\*.**

\*\*16 are Career employees and 16 are CCAs.

OUT THERE



Fred Acedo  
PO Box 6532  
Bakersfield, CA. 93386-6532

Dear Fred,

I have another idea for a cartoon. On January 6<sup>th</sup>, wind chills got down to 50 degrees below zero for the day, with highs in the 20's below. Schools were closed for two days. This was cold even for Iowa. Carriers still had to deliver mail though.

So here's my idea: Two farmers are in front of a barn. The first farmer is bringing in the cows. The second farmers asked why. The first farmer replies there is a livestock warning to bring in the cows. The second farmer asks why since the letter carriers are still out delivering mail. Then a second pane would show a carrier delivering mail in the blowing snow and wind. I don't know if it's doable, just an idea.

Thanks,



John Pfiffner  
Vice President  
Eastern Iowa Branch 373  
753 43<sup>rd</sup> St NE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

See something that you think might make for a great cartoon? Send your suggestion to:

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

Of course, you'll never know what you might get...

### OUT THERE





# Biggest Loser 2014

## Brundage Station

Beatriz Munoz	6.69%
Stacy Castillo	0.00%
Jeff Harrington	5.07%
Kim Pumphrey	0.00%
Ruben Gonzales	7.15%
Yvonne Esquivel	3.11%
Shurie Amick	2.52%
Inderdeep Gill	1.67%
Mabel Bullis	2.90%
Cesar Rivera	-1.74%
Kim Williams	0.00%
Rosie Padilla	2.28%
John Ortega	4.18%
Maria Gutierrez	6.76%
Vicky Guerrero	0.00%

## South Station

Andrew Garcia	2.69%
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## Shafter Station

Melissa Johnson	-1.51%
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## Delano Station

Luis Campos	5.37%
Serena Ornelaz	0.00%
Gracie Silva	1.21%

Next Weigh In is Saturday March 1, 2014

Total Amount	\$925.00
- monthly winnings	<u>\$75.00</u>
	\$850.00

Congratulations to Bill Herrera of Stockdale Station for losing the most weight by percentage in Round One!

Ruben Gonzales of Brundage Station is closely behind him by .38%

Calculations on getting the % is the Beginning Weight - current weight/Beginning weight, move decimal 2 spaces.

Finale weigh-in is Tuesday April 1, 2014. 1st Place Winner 75% = \$634.50. 2nd Place Winner 25% = \$215.50..

## Stockdale Station

Teresa Garcia	-0.27%
Beatriz Rodriguez	-1.62%
Robin Richard	3.52%
Tina Harbour	0.00%
Tanya Courson	0.00%
Amanda O'Neill	0.00%
Annette Ortega	0.70%
Billy Herrera	7.53%

## Dole Court Station

Glenn Ryder	2.56%
Laura Gordon	2.28%
Jennifer Hernandez	0.00%
Art Mooney	0.00%
Dan Medina	0.75%
Faviola Estrada	2.66%
Fransico Herrera	3.99%

## Laton Station

George Vaquera	0.00%
Maggie Young	2.15%



Bill Herrera from Stockdale Station with his "winning" smile!

OUT THERE



# Being a Steward

When I first started out in the Post Office, I didn't think about being a Shop Steward at all. After the second year into my career of being a Letter Carrier, I was approached by my Steward and asked to join the Union. At the same time, I was also asked by him if I wanted to be the Shop Steward.

John Ross was my Steward. He was going on to help the USPS as an NALC facilitator in a process called Employee Involvement (E.I.) and he knew that Shafter would need someone to do the work.

I didn't know what a Steward did. In fact, with only a relatively short time in the Postal Service, I didn't know much at all. But, I was willing to learn! And, boy, did I!!

I started off like everyone else going to meetings and learning about the Rights that Letter Carriers had. I started to learn about what "The Contract" was and how important it was to make sure that management followed the rules.

The more I learned, the more I knew that I wanted to learn more and more to be able to help out my fellow Carriers.

At the time, I thought I was doing something good to help out but didn't see that becoming a Steward would place a target on my back. But I learned about that, too.

I had some great teachers who helped me along the way. They helped me learn how to file grievances and after five or six I started to get the hang of it. Still, I needed help on different cases that I filed. Learning as I was going along meant more meetings and classes and

I tried to get involved in everything that was going on.

Some people in Management where I worked understood my issues and sometimes agreed with me. On the other hand, that agreement didn't extend to everything. So, I won a few and lost a few. But, the atmosphere where I worked was a good one and was one of mutual respect.

That changed when we got a Postmaster who basically said, "We are going to do it *my way* and I don't care what your Contract says." *THAT* atmosphere led me to become a much better Shop Steward. I learned more about the Contract than ever and I used it to try to ensure that the Rights ensured by the Contract weren't violated.

I felt that this was the right thing to do.

At the time, Shafter was a small office with seven employees. Over the course of the first two years the Postmaster was in the office, I filed more Grievances than many of the larger offices in Bakersfield.

I didn't know that I was beginning to have a reputation.

Over the years, I tried to involve myself in various events which were held by the Postal Service like the grand opening of the then-new GMF, the unveiling of new stamps like the Cesar Chavez stamp, Pony Express Rider ceremony, and even retirement dinners for people who didn't work in Shafter.

I recall one dinner that I attended and I was looking for a place to sit. I asked a few older men sitting at a table if I could join them. As they told me that I would be welcome to sit with them, I introduced myself. I was surprised when they told me that they knew who I was.

Surprised? Yes, I was. A Letter Carrier from a small office and apparently people knew who I was. I wasn't an officer of the

OUT THERE



Union who was out there negotiating the Contract in other cities. I was just the Shop Steward in Shafter.

I feel that any reputation I had was because I'd had good leaders in Branch 782 to learn from. Tony Chavez, Paul Alexander, Frank Thomasy and Mike Towery have all been excellent Branch Presidents! As each one took his place as our leader, they all made our Union stronger.

With their help, I became a Steward who was honest, who was trustworthy and who tried to be righteous in everything that I did. That's the way I wanted to be all my life so that part was easy.

My approach to being a Steward helped. I worked with a few managers who told me that if they didn't believe I was being honest they wouldn't have agreed to settle a Grievance.

Many years after I began my own journey as a Letter Carrier, my daughter, Deven, started out in the same post office where I worked. By the time she made probation, she was transferred into Bakersfield's South Station. When she finally got to her station, they mistakenly thought she was me because of our last name. It was hard for her and easy at the same time.

Deven has picked up some "postal smarts" by watching and learning from me. I tried to do the same thing as the Steward in my office as I tried to educate people that we have Rights and that Management shouldn't get away with doing things which are wrong.

However, most employees don't care. They just want to do their job and go home. If somebody else is Management's target, they just want to ignore it since it isn't them. Sadly, even when they are a witness to something they don't want to get involved in because it might cause them problems. But, when *they* are the ones who are having problems they can't understand why nobody is willing to help them except for the Shop Steward.

Stewards are held to a higher standard than others. We know the Rights of Carriers. We try to do what's right and know how things can work against their interests. For example, I don't know how many times I've had to caution people to just tell the truth when they are questioned about something. Also, I try to make sure that people know that they don't have to keep talking and talking because that might open up a can of worms that can then turn into a mess. A mess which the Shop Steward has to try to clean up!

I want to point something out that is really important. First and

foremost, always ask for a Shop Steward if you feel that a discussion that you are involved in might lead to some type of discipline. Once you request the Steward to be your representative, you don't have to say anything. Wait! The Steward is there to witness what goes on and to advise you on what you should do.

Another thing in the life of the Steward is that—too often—when a Grievance is settled, the result might not be what we wanted. A negotiated agreement is, sometimes, a compromise. Although it may be frustrating, part of learning to be a Steward involves the reality that things don't always go our way.

Now that I've retired, I didn't think that I would be hearing that any of the new managers knew who I was. When I went into my old office to ask if the Carriers could have breakfast on me, the manager asked me who I was. I told him that I used to work there and gave him my name. I'd never met the man before, but he acted like he knew my name.

Any of you can be a Steward. If you take on this job, you *will* learn the Contract! You *will* learn about the Rights that Letter Carriers have! And, you'll learn so much, much more!

If you don't want to be a Steward, it is still important that you make the effort to attend the Union meetings and learn more about how to become a professional Letter Carrier! You can make your Shop Steward's life easier by knowing more about this job.

As a Steward, I know that it helped so much when I didn't have to dig, dig, dig for information. If you know something about what occurred, let the Steward know!

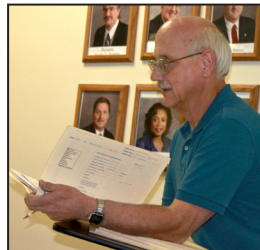
Stewards aren't looking out for their own good. They are looking to protect each and every single person in the office. It is not an easy thing. And, being a Steward really does open up your eyes about so many things

I know that I took very seriously what I did as a Steward! What I did might result in a job saved, or the impact to a family if there was a disruption in income with a suspension.

In closing, I want to tell you that the best Stewards are those who know that they have to do the Right thing and then do it to the best of their ability! It's not easy. But, it is possible...

JERRY PATTERSON  
Retired Branch 782 Steward

Shop Stewards at a recent Shop Steward meeting.



OUT THERE



# 2014 NALC HBP Info

## At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CVS/CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
<b>NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
CVS/CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
<b>CIGNA Dental Discount Program</b>	<b>1-877-521-0244</b>
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-333-4636
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)	(661) 631-8520
LabCorp Lab Services	(661) 631-9258
<b>Shared Services (Retirees Info!!!)</b>	<b>1-877-477-3273</b>

NALC Health Benefit Plan  
20547 Waverly Court  
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

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

\*\* NALC Drug Prescription Program is **MANDATORY** generic (unless specified by your doctor, at additional cost to member). Preferred retail pharmacy 1st and 2nd fills, you pay 20% of cost of generic/30% of name brand/45% non-formulary. MAIL ORDER/CVS PRESCRIPTIONS (when NALC is primary): 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand, \$58 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand, \$80 non-formulary; **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary) Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of formulary, 30% non-formulary. **MEDICARE PRIMARY** (mail order): 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 formulary, \$52 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$10 generic, \$55 formulary, \$70 non-formulary; 90 day supply \$4 for NALCSELECT generic (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$4 for NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs); NALCSENIOR generic antibiotics are available **FREE** for a 30 day supply, when Medicare is primary (certain antibiotics only).

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

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

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

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

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

## CVS MinuteClinic

MinuteClinic walk-in medical clinics are staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants who provide treatment for common family illnesses and injuries, administer vaccinations, conduct physicals and wellness screenings, and offer monitoring for chronic conditions.

Practitioners can diagnose, treat and write prescriptions for common family illnesses as strep throat, bladder infections, pink eye and infections of the ears, nose and throat; provide common vaccinations for flu, pneumonitis, pertussis and hepatitis among others; treat minor wounds, abrasions, joint sprains and skin conditions such as poison ivy, ringworm and acne; provide a range of wellness services, including sports and camp physicals, smoking cessation and TB testing; offer routine lab tests, instant results and education for those with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure or asthma.

Contact Mark Ramirez for more specific answers to questions that you may have about the CVS MinuteClinic services.

# There is an old saying: “Be true to your teeth, or they’ll be false to you.”

This may sound funny, but it is very true. If you don’t take care of your teeth, you and your teeth could have a falling out. (And, this is no joke!!!)

Brushing after meals is important, but brushing alone only removes about 65% of food particles. The other 35% of food particles are left wedged between teeth. If not removed, they can turn into bacteria and eventually plaque, and bad breath. Plaque is a film of bacteria and sugars that can coat teeth. If not removed by brushing, it can harden, and become calculus or tartar. Plaque is responsible for many problems with teeth and gums.

One problem is “GINGIVITIS”. It is the first stage of gum disease, which is characterized by red and swollen gums that bleed when brushing, and the gums start to recede away from the teeth. Periodontal disease or periodontitis is the latest stage of gum disease and is characterized by red swollen gums, loose teeth and infections. If the damage to the gums is bad enough, the teeth may have to be removed.

Plaque doesn’t just affect your mouth, it can affect your overall health.

The American Heart Association actually lists gum disease as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention report that people with gum disease are more likely to suffer a stroke, or a respiratory infection if plaque or bacteria reach the lungs, by way of bleeding gums. Flossing and brushing your teeth is important for healthy teeth and gums, and *can* affect your total overall health.

A key dietary recommendation to prevent periodontal disease is to avoid sugar, because sugar increases plaque formation. Foods like nuts and seeds are high in zinc, they help take care of your teeth. Vitamin C rich foods like citrus fruits provide important nutritional supplements to your teeth and gums. Periodontal health is closely linked to Vitamin C intake.

Have regular dental check ups. And remember to brush, and FLOSS, FLOSS, FLOSS.....to prevent TOOTH... LOSS, LOSS, LOSS.

MARK RAMIREZ  
NALC Health Benefit Representative  
Golden Empire Branch 782

## Humor is also a good medicine...

A Kansas farm wife called the local phone company to report her telephone failed to ring when her friends called and—on the few occasions when it did ring—her dog always moaned right before the phone rang.

The telephone repairman proceeded to the scene, curious to see this psychic dog or senile lady. He climbed a telephone pole, hooked in his test set, and dialed the subscriber’s house.

The phone didn’t ring right away, but then the dog moaned and the telephone began to ring.

Climbing down from the pole, the telephone repairman found:

1. The dog was tied to the telephone system’s ground wire with a steel chain and collar.
2. The wire connection to the ground rod was loose.
3. The dog was receiving 90 volts of signaling current when the number was called.
4. After a couple of jolts, the dog would start moaning and then urinate.
5. The wet ground would complete the circuit, thus causing the phone to ring.

This demonstrates that some problems CAN be fixed by pissing and moaning..... Thought you’d like to know.



# from the editor-guy

Okay, I'm looking at that last pesky, irksome blank page in this month's newsletter... Is there something that I can write that might be of interest? You be the judge.

As a springboard, I want to make sure that I make this one sentence stand out: "All pictures courtesy of Anita Holderman, NALC Branch 782 Photographer." I really appreciate the fact that she provided so much visual material to me. Life is good!

This also underscores the point that Mike Towery made in his Presidential article this month: "...the Union is all of us...not just the President, the Executive Board or the Shop Stewards..."

Jerry Patterson mentioned John Ross in his article. John retired so long ago that the vast majority of you don't even recognize the name. I knew him and learned to appreciate his dedication to making Branch 782 more effective. It was inspiring.

John, when asked, wrote a short article about the Letter Carrier for whom this newsletter is named—"Ed" Baker. (No, our newsletter wasn't named for the guy who founded Bakersfield.) E.A. Baker was a former newsletter editor who also

did the best that he could to make Branch 782 more effective. Ed Baker was gone before I started my career, but his legacy is one which lives on.

These thoughts caused me to think about my own journey as I look forward to a path which is a whole lot shorter than the road that I've literally already walked to this point.

Thinking about this makes me think about "Firsts".

Do you remember the first time that you stood in line to clock on? No matter how much time has elapsed, you probably do.

Or, how about the very first time that **YOU** were told by your supervisor to give away a swing? How cool was that??? Almost like it was Christmas, right? Go home in eight hours??? Wow!!!

And then there was that very first time that you had a dog come at you. Whether it was from behind a bush, through a screen door, out of a customer's arms ("She doesn't bite!") or over a fence...you probably have more than a vague memory!

And—for those of you who have joined "The Club": that first dog bite while you were dressed in those Letter Carrier blues can still be recalled quite vividly. (Unfortunately, too many of us have dealt with multiple bites or with injuries severe enough to have caused permanent damage. I've known too many, like Dave Carlyon, who have,)

Do you remember the first time that a little question percolated in your head as you wondered if your supervisor was "people skills" challenged? (This is a trick question.)

How about that first time that you found yourself driving that postal vehicle in the snow? Or, can you remember when a supervisor walked up to you and said, "We have too many people today, do you want to go home and take Annual Leave?" Sigh...

Now that I have this string of thoughts going, I want to say that I love the accent that Fred Acedo's "Out There" cartoons bring to my work as your Branch 782 Editor-guy. His insights are keenly on point as he captures slices of life that Letter Carriers all over the country recognize. Many of his cartoons are reproduced in NALC newsletters all over the country because Fred knows our world...

BASIL ZUNIGA

OUT THERE



OUT THERE





# Branch Officers

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<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>John Ortega</b>	<b>(661) 809-8140</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.

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

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

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

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Delano (93215)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Lamont (93241)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
McFarland (93250)	Bonnie Whitbey	(661) 302-7354
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
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Wasco (93280)	Joanne Layton	(661) 325-5526
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Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
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Dole Court (93308)	Shari Sharp	(661) 364-5544
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Rick Plummer, Webmaster



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# General Meeting

Tuesday  
February 25, 2013  
7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office  
2628 "F" Street  
Bakersfield, California

Each and every month Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage **YOU** to come to our Meeting.

It goes up by \$50 each month that there is no winner\*.

This month, you could win

# \$350

\*There is a \$500 cap.

OUT THERE

