

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



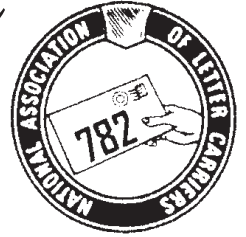
ARVIN
CALIFORNIA CITY
McFARLAND
TAFT

AVENAL
DELANO
MOJAVE
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST
TRONA

BORON
LAMONT
SHAFTER
WASCO

CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901



NUMBER 4

WEB VERSION

APRIL 2017



It's THAT Time Again!!!

On Saturday March 17th, a meeting was held in Santa Clarita for the 25th Annual Letter Carrier Food Drive. Those in attendance from Branch 782 were Shari Sharp, Angie Hernandez, Lynnelle Howell, and Norma Hamer. After a Safety briefing, the Food Drive meeting began and bags, cards, and sponsorships were discussed. While there might be a shortage of bags this year, there will still be bags we can use to collect food.



The Letter Carrier Food Drive is a "WIN-WIN-WIN!" annual event. *Let's ALL come together once again and be helpful to those in need!!*

This year's Food Drive will be on May 13th. *Let's all make this one the best one ever!!*

NORMA HAMER

NALC Branch 782 Associate Office Letter Carrier Food Drive Facilitator

Last Year: 118,223 Pounds!!

AND, THIS YEAR?

Arvin (93203)	255	Hillcrest Station (93306)	11368
Avenal (93204)	800	Dole Court (93308/12/14)	27786
Delano (93215)	3756	Stockdale Station (93309)	13900
Lamont (93241)	300	Camino Media (93311/13)	6638
McFarland (93250)	536	Mojave (93501)	347
Shafter (93263)	4709	California City (93504)	825
Taft (93268)	4500	Boron (93516)	391
Wasco (93280)	3216	Edwards AF Base (93523)	403
Downtown Station (93301)	2764	Tehachapi (93561)	2465
South Station (93304)	103833	Ridgecrest (93555)	13785
East Brundage (93305/07)	10676	and Trona (93562)	

Additional Food Drive Information on Pages 6 - 7...

Minutes of the March 2016 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 February, 2017 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargent-At-Arms Frank Martinez. All members of the Executive Board were present, except HBP Representative Mark Ramirez. The Stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Edwards, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet; Assistant Recording Secretary Norma Hamer; Assistant Financial Secretary Marie Rodriguez; OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the February 28, 2017 meeting were read by Assistant Recording Secretary Norma Hamer and accepted with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: Applications were received from Oscar Maya, Adela Carrasco, Viviana Arizaga and Andrew McMillian. Adela was present at the meeting and was initiated by Vice President, John Ortega.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Teresa Ortega reported that the Picnic planning is great. Basil Zuniga reported that, last month, Dole Court Carriers folded the newsletter; there were lots of people here so we were done early. Next month will be Stockdale's turn. Basil discussed the print and web version of the newsletter. He also gave Jeff Harrington the Bowling Tournament plaque to have it updated. Mike recognized and thanked Basil for the great job he does when a member passes away. Kim Gerdes read the article regarding Jesse Avalos, which is included as an attachment in the Minutes. Frank Martinez reported that there was a meeting of the Social and Recreation Committee and new ideas were discussed. The committee will be donating water for Carriers during the Food Drive. Kim Gerdes reported that there are 689 books remaining. Shari Sharp reported that the Food Drive t-shirts are ordered. The shirts are hot pink and will be \$17.50 each the polo shirts are blue and \$20.00 each.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: John Ortega read the proposed changes to the By-Laws Article 3 Section 1 "The regular meeting of this Branch shall be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month except for the months of November and December, at 7:00 p.m. at the Branch 782 Union Office, 2628 F Street, Bakersfield, California. The November and December meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of the month." The By-Laws Committee recommendation is one of approval. A discussion was held and a motion made, seconded by Molly Biggar to change the day of the November and December meeting to the third Wednesday of the month. The recommend approval was accepted by the membership and approved. The second change was new language to Article X, Section 10, "A drawing using

the current membership roster provided by the Financial Secretary will be conducted at the regular meeting of the Branch with the beginning amount of fifty dollars. If the member whose name is drawn is not present at the meeting the amount will increase fifty dollars each successive month until it reached five hundred dollars and will remain at five hundred dollars until there is a member present whose name is drawn. Once there is a winner, the amount of the drawing will start again at fifty dollars. Members must be present to win unless the absence is due to attendance at the State or National Conventions." The Committee's recommendation was one of approval. A discussion was held and the members voted to approve the committee recommendation.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Deven Patterson discussed the problems she is having with getting the time to properly train new Carriers. Basil Zuniga discussed his trip to Fresno Branch 231 where he showed the slide show of Fred's cartoons. A discussion was held regarding the sick leave packet that Carriers are being given after they call in sick. They are being told to sign that they have received the packet. If you have been told to sign for this packet let you Steward know so a grievance can be filed. Jeff Harrington asked if the Postal Service is exempt from the Federal hiring freeze. Mike Towery replied that, "Yes the Postal Service is exempt." A discussion was held regarding 3996's, Carriers should ask for a completed copy. Management is required to give Carriers a copy that they have completed. Francisco Herrera asked about management holding Carrier's time cards preventing Carriers from clocking in. Mike told members that if this is happening in your office be sure to let the steward know so that a grievance can be filed. Tami Foshee discussed a program which had started in Seattle which a photo is taken of each letter and customers can sign up to received an e-mail of what mail they should received that day.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery asked each retiree present at the meeting when they retired and how many years they worked. He thanked the retirees for attending the meetings and he now understands what the "good old days" mean. Basil Zuniga gave a color copy of the newsletter to Alan Smith and Rolando Trevino which has the articles about their retirement and career. Mike Towery reported that the Steward meeting will return to the first and third Wednesday of the month.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$13,940.26 was collected for the month of March.



Welcome New Members!!

Oscar Maya
Viviana Arizaga

Adela Carrasco
Andrew McMillan

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

	January	February
Beginning Balance	\$64,269.18	\$52,838.46
Dues and Income	\$14,694.47	\$12,996.93
Total Balance	\$78,963.65	\$65,835.39
Total Expenses	\$26,125.19	\$ 3,310.35
Ending Balance	\$52,838.46	\$62,525.04

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Rick Plummer (\$21.50/\$21.50)

There was a drawing for a Starbucks gift card which was won by Deven Patterson.

The drawing for \$500.00 was won by Art Mooney!

There were 46 members and 1 guest present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

KIM GERDES

NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

**We are not sheep. *UNLESS* we
allow ourselves to think we are...**

by Patrick Johnson,
NALC Branch 2 Vice-President

Many USPS managers and supervisors will try to take on the role of "The Wolf" in order to try to make employees feel like sheep. They use tactics of intimidation and bullying to make employees feel timid and weak. They try to convince employees that there is no strength in numbers and that they should just only worry about themselves. Why? Because this makes it a lot easier to single out, manipulate or thin out "The Herd".

As one of the approximately 295,000 members of the National Association of Letter Carriers, *each* of us have to show management that WE ARE NOT SHEEP! We are not just "a herd". We have to show management that WE will work together to protect members of our union against coercion and threats! We have to show management that we will NOT be divided! We must work **TOGETHER** as a cohesive force to ensure that **EVERY** employee is treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

Every single Letter Carrier deserves the right to be able to come to work and to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay without constant harassment from management to make their so-called "numbers"!

Speaking of numbers: Nationwide, the USPS has one supervisor for every 19 craft employees. It is Letter Carriers who are the face of the USPS, not management! It is Letter Carriers our customers see on a day-to-day basis! It is Letter Carriers who will not let snow nor rain, nor heat nor gloom of night keep us from our appointed rounds!

Letter Carriers are what make management jobs possible. Without us, there would be no Postal Service. *They really need to stop and think about how they treat the people who keep them employed!*

This message has been abridged to fit the available space.
The original article is courtesy of the West Allis, WI
NALC Branch 2 March 2017 *Pioneer*.

Non-Members February 2017*

Downtown Station

Sarah Kirby
Javier Cruz

South Station

Aloalii Maui Jr.

Brundage/East Bakersfield

Vicky Guerrero

Hillcrest

100% UNION!!!

Dole Court

100% UNION!!!

Stockdale

James Oh
Marty Martinez
Daniel Zuniga

Camino Media

100% UNION!!!

Arvin

100% UNION!!!

Avenal

100% UNION!!!

California City

100% UNION!!!

Delano

Cynthia V. Quebral
Daniela Barreto

Lamont

100% UNION!!!

Mojave

Alexander Keller

Ridgecrest

G. D Schatz
Erik Bennand

Shafter

M. D. Voights
L. M. New

Taft

K. J. Hughes

Tehachapi

B. C. Den Beeman

Trona

100% UNION!!!

Wasco

100% UNION!!!

*CCA names are
in italics

In Memorium

Don Gomez



Donald Gomez of Anaheim Hills passed away March 20, 2017. He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Olga Gomez; 3 stepchildren; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 2 grandchildren; and 1 great-grandchild; also many nieces and nephews.

Before retiring he had a long career with the US Postal Service in Bakersfield, after which he and his wife moved to Anaheim Hills where he worked for the Yorba Linda School District; he retired from that post in 1996.

Graveside memorial services will be at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Orange, CA, on Saturday, April 1st at 11:00 am, followed by a "Celebration of Life" at the Anaheim Hills Golf Course Clubhouse.

Published in *Bakersfield Californian* on Mar. 29, 2017

Critters, family and friends. But not necessarily in that order...
Diana Mills from Shafter has retired!!!

She's been clocking on since July 9th, 1994. Her last day was March 31st.

She's a simple person not even wanting a big Ta-do for her departure, *but I felt I needed to write something about her.*

She's been there for her family, her friends, and her coworkers! She's been great to work with and *NOT ONCE* have I ever seen her get upset! She's *ALWAYS* taken moments that would have frustrated others and has remained calm. The occasional, "Okay... Whatever... Doesn't make sense, but I'll do it..." comes out and not another word about it.

She would even go above and beyond and be willing to help out *whenever* and *wherever* when needed in 93263!

She will most likely spend a great more amount of time with her grand babies, her husband, and her critters.

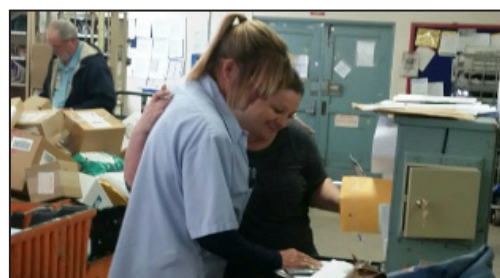
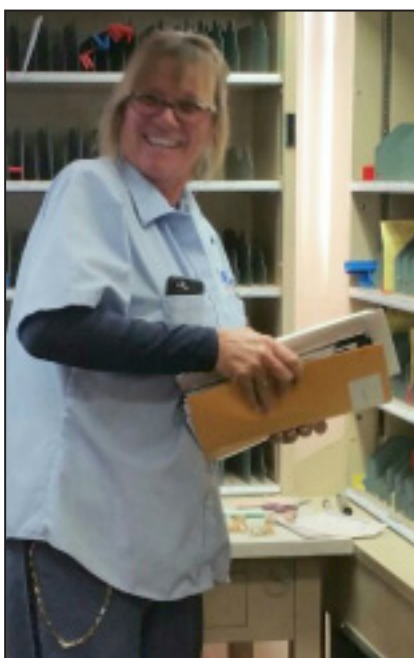
Her presence on the workroom floor *WILL* be missed. But — like she mentioned — *"You know where I live."*

Love you, Diana!!!

NORMA HAMER
Shafter, California Shop Steward



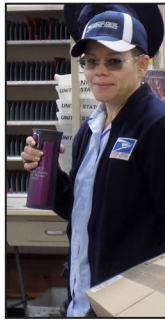
The "Shafter Gang" on March 31, 2017 —the day that Diana retired:
(left to right) Fred Doll RR2, Israel Cedillos PTF, Norma Hamer C1, Diana Mills C3, Lori New C2, Melanie Davis RR1, Amber Laffery CCA



It's hard not to smile on that last day? Ask Diana..

Rolando Trevino Retired on March 31, 2017 and 93306 had a Potluck!

For more pix, check out the web version...



(left to right) **(1st row)** Pam Smith (601) Mona Rener (RRC) Rolando Trevino (616); **(2nd row)** Robert Guererro (603), Rosie Cardenas (T-6), Rami Shergill (608), Rebekah Richmond (T-6), Peggy Merjil (613), David Rener (630), Joe Gutierrez (615), Derrick Alemao (624), Roman Chavez (604), Pete Lopez (CCA), BrianCastle (626), Martin Patino (Station Manager); **(3rd row)** Gabriel Trujillo (UAR), Carlos Violante (CCA), Eric Zuniga (CCA), Justin Gerber (CCA), Vince Gonzalez (617), Roy Rodriguez (611), Mario Marquez (627), Otto Hernandez (634), Ed Mota (621), Ronnie Mireles (602), John Vasquez (620); **MISSING:** Janice Montijo (629), Debbie Williams, Lou Gutierrez (T-6), Carlos Torres (T-6), Brad Smith (614), Melissa Leonard (623), Barbara Bernal (619), Manuel Martinez (605), Teresa Gutierrez (628), Nervie Moreno (T-6); CCAs Erica Moya, Sam Audilette, Hayley Vargas, Brandon Risner, Elias Pichardo, Carrier Jo Taylor, and Viviana Arizaga (This picture was taken on March 27, 2017 and Shop Steward Pam Smith provided the names. Thank you so very much Pam!!!)



A picture of the last time Rolando Trevino punches out to the street at that time clock!

MEGAN J. BRENNAN
POSTMASTER GENERAL, CEO



January 3, 2017

Mr. Fredric V. Rolando
President, National Association
of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
100 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Dear Mr. Rolando:

The United States Postal Service is proud to join the National Association of Letter Carriers and other national partners in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.

As we acknowledge this milestone accomplishment, our commitment to help stamp out hunger remains as strong as ever. Last year, our carriers collected a record 80.1 million pounds of food, surpassing the 71 million pounds collected in 2015. Since the drive began in 1993, donations have totaled 1.5 billion pounds of food. Together, we are continuing to make a difference in the lives of millions of Americans in need.

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, which will be held on May 13, 2017, occurs during an important time when most school lunch programs are about to be suspended for the summer months, leaving millions of children to find alternative sources of nutrition.

All postal employees are encouraged to support the Food Drive by collecting donations, delivering postcards and promotional bags, and doing everything we can do to make the 25th anniversary a huge success.

I look forward to working with you, our letter carriers, and all postal employees across the country to make this year's food drive the best in our history as we do our part to help stamp out hunger in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Megan J. Brennan", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Megan J. Brennan

475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20260-0010
WWW.USPS.COM

How can the Letter Carriers' Food Drive help you?



Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato

As we enter the critical final weeks before the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive on Saturday, May 13, we expect that local branch leaders are reaching out to their fellow letter carriers and asking for their help in getting all of the important food drive-related tasks completed.

There are postcards and promotional bags to be distributed to each delivery unit. Local television and radio stations are looking to interview letter carriers about the upcoming drive. Help is needed in getting the posters with the Family Circus artwork hung up all around town. There are city council meetings to attend, proclamations to be requested and maybe even food drive T-shirts to hand out.

Bottom line: There's no shortage of tasks to be done and requests for help to be made.

But I'd like to turn the request around and ask you: What do you need to be successful on Saturday, May 13?

“There's no shortage of tasks to be done and requests for help to be made.”

Ask for support from your local USPS supervisor, postmaster or district manager: All letter carriers should attend a food drive stand-up talk on the clock, to include watching the motivational video. Guidance on delivery of postcards and (if available) promotional bags, as well as a plan for the day of the drive, must be provided by a joint local NALC/USPS team.

There is unwavering support for the food drive by Postmaster General Megan Brennan and by USPS Chief Operations Officer David Williams. Any unresolved conflicts regarding local implementation should be brought directly to your national business agent. A copy of letters of explicit support from the PMG and the COO, along with a Postal Service action plan (written by USPS, representing their committed plan for the food drive), can be found at the Food Drive Toolkit link at nalc.org/food—look under “Support from USPS.”

Ask for help with picking up food donations: Most branches have found groups of volunteers who can help with picking up the food donations. Ask for volunteers from your local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, from middle school and high school groups and athletic teams, your local AARP, United Way, VFW and American Legion chapters. There are so many organizations full of people eager

to help, and your local branch leaders can coordinate those groups' assistance easily—and they, in turn, can help you on what we all know can be a very busy day. Asking for help now, weeks before the drive, will put “connecting with volunteers” on your local leaders' front burners.

Rank-and-file letter carriers can also help here, by making suggestions of good volunteer groups you personally know about—especially middle school and high school groups that are looking for good volunteer projects that can help them provide documented community service hours for their members. Talk with your shop steward or your local branch president about your ideas.

Ask about giving food from our drive to a local food pantry: One of the most popular aspects of our food drive is that all of the food collected is given to local pantries selected by the branch president. Most branches provide donated food to multiple food agencies—from large food banks to small shelters; from outreach centers to church pantries. Simply ask your branch president to include a specific non-profit organization as a food recipient. This is great for the neighborhood resource, it's important for local relationships in our communities, and it reinforces for each of us the real person-to-person impact we're making with our work.

Yes, we ultimately need you to make this food drive a success. We make a lot of requests of you as we work on the largest one-day food drive in the world.

Now, please ask your local leaders what you need to make this year's food drive a success.



Guest Editorial —

We Should ALL be Mentors!

by Dave Barbuzzi
NALC Branch 25 President

When the senior Carriers were putting in their time early in their careers, the only thing that happened at the post office on Sunday was a collection or two and the delivery of Express Mail. If you were a PTF or TE, chances are you did not work *each and every Sunday*. Chances are, you looked forward to Sunday to relax, to see your family, to chill.

THAT'S NOT THE CASE ANYMORE.

We have become a seven-day full time operation and the new employees, the CCAs, have become 7 day a week employees. Unfortunately, some of them are not warned of this during their job interviews, so they are slapped with the harsh reality when they've been around a month or so and still haven't had a day off.

Seniority is a cherished commodity. As our careers progress, we keep looking at the seniority roster to see where we stand, wondering if and when we'll be able to claim the coveted number 1 spot at the top of the list.

When we do work our way up the list, we know that (provided we submit a slip timely) we'll get whatever vacation time we want. If a route comes up for bid, we own it if we want based on our seniority.

Of course, sometimes a career ends before the Carrier ever reaches number one. Some people retire as soon as possible, while others hang around as long as they can. But, even without ever making it to "Number One" on that list, we all gain benefits as a result of seniority.

The benefits, in most cases, have been hard fought victories. All Carriers all "do their time and pay their dues".

Whether we started as casuals, TEs, CCAs, or PTFs, *EVERY* one of us were overwhelmed during our early years.

Thirty years ago, it was the sheer cased volume and relentless circulars that we had just about every day. Often, two or three sets of circulars *EVERY* day!

Twenty plus years ago it was the rollout of DPS. How were we supposed to deal with this extra tray of mail? Where are we going to put it? Geesh, our backs sure hurt from all this twisting and reaching!

Six years ago FSS is rolled out. *FSS!?!?!?*

Are you kidding me? They still haven't fixed DPS and now they're going to automate the flats too? There's no way we can arm-carry two sets of flats! (By the way, I still don't have to arm-carry even one set of flats so don't try to tell me anything different! *FSS didn't change that no matter how much you want to tell me it did!*)

Right after the roll out of FSS, staffing started to really thin out. Forced overtime was the norm. Carriers went for YEARS without being able to comfortably plan their days off — *and these were the non-ODL Carriers.*

THOSE are the "lumps" that senior Carriers that have been around have experienced. Those lumps are what makes it so sweet to know that any day is available in non-Choice period and any week is available in Choice — based on Seniority...

For the last couple years, there's another great big lump: Amazon.

Now, don't get me wrong, I realize that in many ways Amazon is the salvation of the Postal Service. But, don't get me wrong, in many ways it could turn out to be its damnation...

"OuT tHeRe"



I know that Letter Carriers are all over the place on how they feel about this.

I've spoken to Carriers that have said that they started as a casual or a TE and they had to work god-awful hours and do god-awful work so now it's time for the new hires to experience the same.

I've talked to Carriers that view the new hires as "temporary", just warm bodies to hopefully lessen the load for awhile.

Fortunately, I've also talked to Carriers who have attempted to take the new hires under their wing — to try to “Mentor” them if you will.

New hires (*and* established veterans) make mistakes. They misdeliver mail; they don't fill your gas tank; or, they may not “clean up” the route if they're filling in. Maybe, they even get assistance because they haven't become proficient yet.

Most of these things will work themselves out with experience. Some will not. And, any “Deficiencies” that remain should, of course, definitely be addressed.

Hold on now! I know. I'm **THE** Union guy. So, why am **I** talking about addressing “Deficiencies”? They **SHOULD** be

addressed by mentors — *by the veteran Carriers who have paid their dues.*

There's a Right Way and several wrong ways to deal with a new employee who has potential but isn't quite cutting it.

Many will just ignore it: The “Not My Problem” crew. Some will sing to management. (And what lovely canaries they are. I could never understand those birds.) And, Others, for no reason other than compassion and good will, will ask the new employee if they knew what they did was wrong and if they'd like to know the right way. *We need more of these people.*

We were all pushed to go faster. Some of us did. And, some of us didn't. Some of us cut corners and some of us didn't.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

I can't speak for everyone, but I smartened up when some of the “Old-Timers” took me under their wing and told me what they had to go through to get to where they were.

Take the newbies under your wing! Don't kick them to the curb.

Stay informed! And pass on what you know to the newbies!!!

Stay informed! And pass on what you know to the newbies!!!

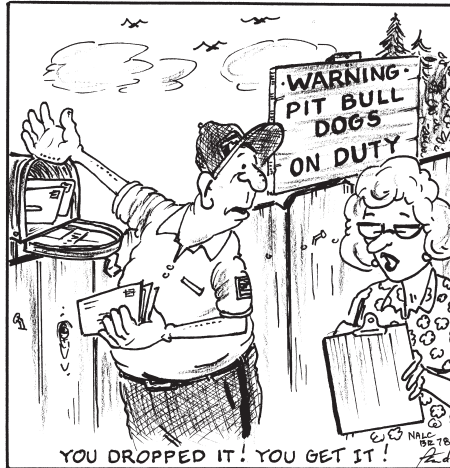
Article courtesy of the Tewksbury, MA NALC Mass Northeast Merged Branch 25 *Wake Up!* published in March 2017.

IN FRED ACEDO'S WORLD, WE'RE ALL STARS...

HAVE AN IDEA FOR FRED????

FRED ACEDO, BR. 782 S.A.N.E.
P.O. BOX 6532
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93386-6532

OUT THERE



“OuT tHeRe”



OUT THERE



Out tHeRe



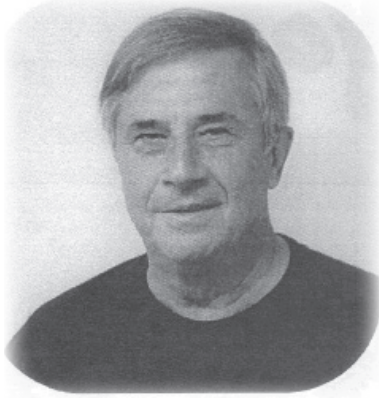
OUT THERE



from the editor-guy

You may already own an original **Out tHeRe** cartoon book with 500 cartoons that we published from 1993 - 2002. Guess what? Volume II features Fred Acedo's work from 2003 through July 2016. There are 1100 more cartoons! YOU can buy a copy...

Contact me (Basil Zuniga) for more details: (661) 205-1603 or brziii@aol.com.



SAVING FOR RETIREMENT STARTS RIGHT NOW!!!

By President Dan Yianakopolos

When I put my articles together I try hard not to start preaching, but this is a very important subject. I have been made aware that many of our CCA's, that are converting to regular, are not contributing to the Thrift Savings Plan. Those that are, may not be putting in enough.

Understand that I am not a financial advisor, but some things towards retirement are just common sense. Money grows when you are young. The dollar you put in your account today can grow ten fold. The dollar you put in 20 years from now may have trouble just doubling. The reason for this is simply a matter of the time your money is invested, and the fact that a diversified portfolio is built for the long haul. Markets go up and down but over time show decent profit.

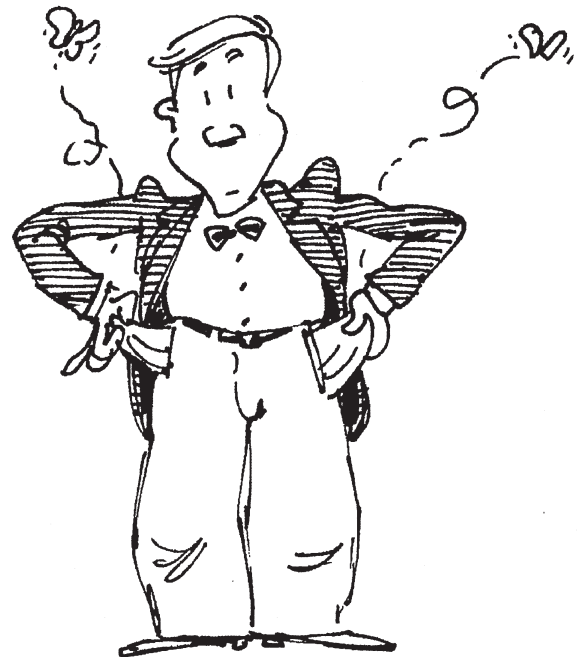
For example when you close to within 5 years of retirement, it may not be a smart idea to keep your money in the market. It may be smarter to shift those funds to the "G" funds and protect the many years of gains you have earned.

"You need to take charge of your own retirement"

With all of that said, you cannot do any of this if you wait 20 years to start decent contributions.

Understand that you will get matching funds up to 5% in your account. That is free money and automatic gains. Understand also that your contribution is pre-tax dollars. For example if you contribute say \$200 every pay to your account, it may only have an impact of say

\$140-\$150 in your actual take home pay. Above all do not make the mistake of thinking that social security will be your big check when you retire. There is no way to know what social security is going to look like when you retire. You need to take charge of your own retirement. The money that you save may be made available to you in the future in the form of a loan. If you should die it will be made available to your beneficiary. Most importantly it will be there as a solid income when you retire. One other thing, do not forget that if you are a CCA, the NALC through its MBA insurance, now offers a policy just for CCA's. You can start contributing right away. When you make regular you can roll the amount saved right into your thrift savings plan. Time to get started. Yankee



Article courtesy of *The 44 Magnum* published in March 2017 by Manchester New Hampshire NALC Branch 44

Is My TSP Money At Risk???

The TSP recently announced that the government has begun borrowing from the G Fund to avoid running up against the debt ceiling limit.

The national debt is now approaching \$20 trillion. That is just over \$61,000 per citizen and almost \$166,000 per taxpayer.

We do not know when the next debt ceiling limit will be raised but there is little doubt it will be.

In the meantime, many federal employees are contributing to financing the operation of the federal government whether they know about it or not. The reason is because the G fund assets within the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) are used by the federal government to help meet expenses.

The TSP issued this statement on March 16:

The U.S. Treasury was unable to fully invest the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund due to the statutory ceiling on the federal debt. However, G Fund investors remain fully protected and G Fund earnings are fully guaranteed by the federal government. This statutory guarantee has effectively protected G Fund investors many times over the past 25 years. G Fund account balances will continue to accrue earnings and will be updated each business day, and loans and withdrawals will be unaffected.

The Government Securities Investment Fund (G Fund) is one of these other government accounts used to fund the government on a short-term basis. There are assets of about \$480 billion in the TSP, 38% of which is in the G fund.

As most readers know, the TSP is similar to a 401(k) retirement fund for over 5 million current and former government employees and uniformed

service members. To make up for the deficit spending by the government, the Treasury has “suspended reinvestment” or taken assets out of the G Fund to pay for other expenses.

This is not the first time this action has occurred within the G fund. In fact, it has become a routine action taken by the Treasury Department as the federal government keeps spending money at an extraordinary rate above the amount that is received each year.

This is a statement made by the TSP in similar situations that have occurred previously:

The make-whole provision means that TSP participants who have invested in the G Fund will not lose anything. The G Fund account balances would be exactly the same from day to day as if they were invested in Treasury securities. Furthermore, disbursements of TSP loans and withdrawals would not be delayed, nor would the amounts of those payments be reduced.

Each time this occurs, readers ask why the federal government can use retirement funds to fund the government. Here is a quote from the Congressional Research Service:

Congress has granted to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to take certain actions that allow the Treasury temporarily to continue borrowing cash from the public without increasing the public debt. The Secretary is authorized to take these actions, which effectively reduce the obligations of the government that are counted toward the public debt ceiling, only during a “debt-issuance suspension period.”

Continued on next page...

When “extraordinary measures” are taken, the Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to:

- Suspend the investment of amounts in the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund that normally would be invested in interest-bearing Treasury securities;
- Sell or redeem Treasury securities held by the CSRDF prior to maturity; and
- Suspend the issuance of interest-bearing Treasury securities to the “G” fund of the Thrift Savings Plan.

When the “disinvestment” period ends, the securities are reconstructed as if the suspension had not occurred.

In short, the G fund is used as an accounting gimmick to give the federal government more time to work out the problem with the debt ceiling.

Presumably, the debt ceiling will again be raised by some amount before there is a government default. That makes some G fund investors uncomfortable, however, in the long run, it has not made any difference in the value of the investment.

- See more at: fedsmith.com



TSP FUND MANAGEMENT

Do you know how your TSP is being invested? Did you also know that you are losing out on a lot of money if you are not contributing at least 5% to your TSP? IF you contribute 5 percent of your basic pay to TSP each pay period, you will begin receiving a matching contribution equal to 4 percent of your basic pay from the Postal Service, in addition to the 1 percent automatic contribution. If you're making a contribution above 5 percent, the Postal Service will still add an amount equal to 5 percent of your basic pay to the total going into your TSP account each pay period.

G Fund

The G Fund assets are managed internally by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. The G Fund buys a nonmarketable U.S. Treasury security that is guaranteed by the U.S. Government. This means that the G Fund will not lose money.

The G Fund's investment objective is to produce a rate of return that is higher than inflation while avoiding exposure to credit (default) risk and market price fluctuations.

The G Fund invests exclusively in a nonmarketable short-term U.S. Treasury security that is specially issued to the TSP. The earnings consist entirely of interest income on the security.

F, C, S, and I Funds

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board currently contracts BlackRock Institutional Trust Company, N.A. (BlackRock) to manage the F, C, S, and I Fund assets. The F and C Fund assets are held in separate accounts.

The F, C, S, and I Funds are index funds, each of which is invested in order to replicate the risk and return characteristics of its appropriate benchmark index. For example, the C Fund is invested in a stock index fund that fully replicates the Standard and Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index, a broad market index made up of the stocks of 500 large to medium-sized U.S. companies. The C Fund's objective is to match the performance of the S&P 500. The F, C, S, and I Funds remain invested regardless of the performance of the securities markets or the overall economy.

The F Fund's investment objective is to match the performance of the Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index, a broad index representing the U.S. bond market.

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The C Fund's investment objective is to match the performance of the Standard and Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index, a broad market index made up of stocks of 500 large to medium-sized U.S. companies.

The C Fund's investment objective is to match the performance of the Standard and Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index, a broad market index made up of stocks of 500 large to medium-sized U.S. companies.

The S Fund's investment objective is to match the performance of the Dow Jones U.S. Completion Total Stock Market Index, a broad market index made up of stocks of U.S. companies not included in the S&P 500 Index.

The S Fund invests in a stock index fund that tracks the Dow Jones U.S. Completion Total

Stock Market Index. The earnings consist of dividend income and gains (or losses) in the price of stocks.

The S Fund uses an indexing approach to investing. In other words, it is a passively managed fund that remains invested according to its investment strategy regardless of conditions in the bond market or the economy.

The L Funds are invested in the five individual TSP funds based on professionally determined asset allocations.

L Funds

The L Funds, or "Lifecycle" funds, use professionally determined investment mixes that are tailored to meet investment objectives based on various time horizons. The objective is to strike an optimal balance between the expected risk and return associated with each fund.

The L Funds' strategy is to invest in an appropriate mix of the G, F, C, S, and I Funds for a particular time horizon, or target retirement date. The investment mix of each L Fund becomes more conservative as its target date approaches.

The strategy assumes that:

The greater the number of years you have until retirement, the more willing and able you are to tolerate risk (fluctuation) in your TSP account value to pursue higher rates of return.

For a given risk level and time horizon, there is an optimal mix of the G, F, C, S, and I Funds that provides the highest expected return.

To learn more about each of the funds, visit TSP.GOV

This article was courtesy of the April 2017
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Branch 458 Sooner Script

2017 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



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

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

NALC Health Benefit Plan Members:

The NALC Health Benefit Plan does not cover "Dental" except in cases of accidental injury to teeth. See plan brochure for coverage.

But we do have a Dental Discount Program!

Members covered under the NALC HIGH OPTION PLAN must enroll BY PHONE ONLY! The member must call 1-877-521-0244. The cost is \$3.75 per month for "Self Only" \$5.50 per month for "self and family". The savings/discount is around 25%.

Once you have enrolled in Dental Discount Program, you will log on to www.CignaPlussavings.com. On this site (in the right corner), it will show "FIND A DENTIST". Type in your city and zip code, and select a dentist. Or print the page/pages and call the dentist you have selected to make sure they are accepting new patients and that they are STILL ENROLLED in the CignaPlus savings dental program.

Preventive Care Children/Adults Available (See Brochure) Prevents Serious Illnesses, Flu, Tetanus, Pneumonia, and Shingles. Many immunizations are Free (Adult/Child) when administered at a PPO pharmacy/facility. Some will require a prescription from the Doctor.

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.

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

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

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

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

MARK RAMIREZ
 NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative
(661) 398-6075



Health Prescription: A Mark Ramirez Viewpoint!!

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

*The design of the government under our Constitution was **NOT** haphazard.*

Our Founding Fathers understood that governments can oppress people. They knew it from their own experience, and they knew it from their extensive scrutiny of governmental forms throughout history. Concentrated power was more than dangerous, it was life threatening.

That is why:

1. They balanced power between the three Branches.
2. They gave each Branch robust checks on the other two.
3. They gave the National government only enumerated powers, and retained all other powers in the hands of either the people or the states.
4. They used the states to check the National government.
5. The members of each Branch were chosen by a different method.
6. The term of office varied by government position.

7. An impeachment process was defined for extreme cases.

Concentrated political power frightened the Founding Fathers. They believed that only by limiting government could liberty survive the natural tendency of men to dictate the habits of other men.

The balance separation of power with checks was designed to prevent tyranny (unjust or oppressive absolute government power).

"I hope that we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations, which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

Thomas Jefferson

"Good intention will always be pleaded for every assumption of authority. It is hardly too strong to say that the Constitution was made to guard the people against the dangers of good intentions. There are men in all ages who mean to govern well, but they mean to govern. They promise to be good Masters, but they Mean to be Masters!"

Daniel Webster

"If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their money, first by inflation and then by deflation, the banks and the corporations that will grow up around them (around the banks) will deprive the people of their property until their children will wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered."

Thomas Jefferson

"Knowledge is as infinite as the universe. The man who claims to know all, only reveals to all, that he really knows nothing."

Suzy Kassem

"A system is corrupt when it is strictly profit driven, not driven to serve the best interests of it's people."

Suzy Kassem

"He denounced him openly as a Charlatan.....a fraud with no valuable knowledge of any kind, or power beyond those of an ordinary and rather inferior human being."

Mark Twain

MARK "POST-MARK" RAMIREZ
NALC Branch 782 Retired Carrier
NALC Health Benefit Representative

**"POWER AND MONEY, WITHOUT MORALS,
CAN ONLY CORRUPT THE CORRUPTIBLE
IN OUR SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT!!!"**

RULES, RULES, RULES

by Ray Hill, Executive Vice President
NALC Branch 2902

It is, or it should be, common knowledge that Letter Carriers are required to follow USPS rules and regulations — and that if they fail to do so, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal.

The NALC/USPS Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) discusses the tests of just cause for disciplinary actions issued for alleged rule violations and reads as follows, in part:

“...Is there a rule? If so, was the employee aware of the rule? Was the employee forewarned of the disciplinary consequences for failure to follow the rule? It is not enough to say, “Well, everybody knows that rule,” or “We posted that rule ten years ago.” You may have to prove that the employee should have known of the rule. Certain standards of conduct are normally expected in the industrial environment and it is assumed by arbitrators that employees should be aware of these standards. For example, an employee charged with intoxication on duty, fighting on duty, pilferage, sabotage, insubordination, etc., may be generally assumed to have understood that these offenses are neither condoned nor acceptable, even though management may not have issued specific regulations to that effect...”

As written in the JCAM passage I just quoted, certain standards of conduct are normally expected in the workplace and it is assumed by arbitrators that employees should be aware of these rules.

For example, all employees should know that they must not report to work drunk or stoned; that they should not get into fights at work; that they should not steal mail or USPS property; and, that they are expect-

ed to obey the instructions given to them by Management, unless those instructions are illegal or unsafe.

These are “common sense” rules that we all are expected to know and violating them and later pleading ignorance of those rules as your defense in front of an arbitrator will get you nowhere fast.

Reporting Accidents and Injuries

In my position as a full time Branch 2902 officer I spend a fair amount of my time defending Letter Carriers who have been accused of violating some USPS rule or regulation. Sometimes, the Carriers are clearly innocent and it is easy to defend them; and, sometimes the Carriers are clearly guilty of the rule violation they are accused of, making it much more difficult to defend them.

Lately, I have seen Branch 2902 Letter Carriers receiving disciplinary action for violations of what I consider to be some very basic work rules. A basic USPS work rule is the one that requires Carriers to report **ALL** accidents and injuries to their supervisor immediately (or as soon as humanly possible).

That’s pretty basic and simple as rules go, right? Nevertheless I have seen discipline issued to four Carriers in offices that I represent at the Formal A level within the past month for failure to follow this rule.

So, in my ongoing and

never ending quest to keep your USPS personnel files discipline-free, I am going to give a quick refresher course on the rules regarding the reporting of accidents and injuries.

If you are involved in an accident or you injure yourself at work you **MUST** notify Management immediately *whether you think the accident or injury is “serious” or not*. Notify Management of your accident or injury by phoning your office and speaking directly to your supervisor or another Management official. Do not notify Management of your accident or injury by sending a text to your supervisor using your personal cell phone. *Call them at the office on the office phone.*

I understand that a few Carriers do not have cell phones and that in many Post Offices no one answers the phone when you call the office. I know this for a fact because I call Post Offices every day and sometimes let the phone ring 50 times without anyone answering.

If you try to call your office and no one answers after an accident, call us here at the Branch office. **If the accident involves your postal vehicle notify Management immediately, even if there is no damage to either your vehicle, the other vehicle that was involved or any private property involved (i.e. a mailbox, a planter, a tree, etc).**

There have been several occasions where Carriers have been involved in what they thought were minor accidents with other vehicles. The Carriers failed to report those accidents to Management because there was no visible damage to either ve-



Originally published February 2005

hicle and the other party told the Carriers not to worry about it, everything was fine. So, the Carriers did not report the accident to Management or bother to get the other driver's information.

The Carriers thought everything was OK until a week later a personal injury attorney calls USPS and notifies Management that a Carrier driving a USPS vehicle collided with their client's vehicle. According to the attorney, his/her client's vehicle was badly damaged and — *oh, by the way* — his/her client has suffered severe bodily and mental injuries and is suing USPS for some big bucks.

Can you say, "Ca-ching"?

Have you seen those commercials showing USPS LLV's with advertising on the side or back of them for various private companies including Lowe's, eBay, Barkbox, etc?

Well, how about a commercial showing an LLV with a picture of a "cash cow" on the side. (I'm not quite sure exactly what a cash cow looks like, but you get the picture.) People who are involved in accidents with USPS vehicles sometimes retain the services of attorneys who know that the USPS is indeed a cash cow.

Vehicle accidents or incidents are no brainers! **Call them in immediately** whether there is damage or not! The same thing goes for dog bites. **REPORT THEM IMMEDIATELY!**

Walk it Off?

Regarding industrial accidents other than dog bites (i.e. slips, trips and falls), I understand that there are many times that we "injure" ourselves at work but we are sure we can walk it off and we will be just fine. Carriers endure a variety of bumps and bruises throughout the course of their normal workday and usually the pain wears off and they are just fine.

While defending Carriers charged with failure to report an injury immediately, I have always argued that if Carriers notified management every time they got a paper cut, scraped their knuckles on a mailbox or turned their ankle slightly they

would never be able to complete their assignment for the day because they would be spending their time on the phone calling management to report injuries. ***Believe me, I get it.***

But, if you choose to not notify management of an injury because you think you can walk it off, you ***WILL*** have a problem later if you can't walk it off and you did not report the injury for several hours, or days, or whatever the case may be.

If you are not sure of the severity of an injury you must notify management anyway, *even if you do not need medical treatment.*

It's best to just call them and tell them what happened so that you can protect yourself.

Smitty was Right, by God

About 15 years ago, I was stung by a bee just below my right eye while delivering mail. A patron was outside at the house next to where I was stung and I asked him if he could see anything below my eye. He could see the stinger sticking out so he went inside his house, got some tweezers, came back outside and pulled the stinger out from below my eye.

He let me use his phone and I called the office and reported the injury to supervisor Jim Smith, AKA "Smitty". (Do you North Hollywood carriers remember Smitty?)

I told Smitty I just was just calling to report the bee sting but I did not need medical treatment. Smitty told me I should go to the Postal doctor (yea, right) to be checked out. I said, "No way. I will be just fine. Thanks but no thanks."

I hung up the phone and finished delivering the loop I was on, which took about 20 minutes.

When I got back to my USPS vehicle, Smitty was standing there waiting for me with a frozen plastic water bottle he told me I should hold under my eye to reduce the swelling. He once again tried to convince me to go see the Postal doctor to be checked out, but I once again refused treatment saying I would be fine. I held the frozen water bottle under my eye for about

three seconds and said, "Screw this," and continued delivering my route and I never went to the doctor.

Well...the next day I woke up and my whole cheek below the eye was swollen. I went to work anyway and I felt pretty stupid when Smitty approached me at my case with that "I told you so" look on his smiling face. Never mind my swollen cheek, the real suffering came from me having to admit to Smitty — for the first time ever — that he was right.

I met with Smitty on many Step 1 and Informal A grievances over the years and I can assure you that he was never right. (Those of you that worked for Smitty know exactly what I'm talking about.)

I later read that you should never remove a bee stinger with tweezers because when you grip the stinger with the tweezers the poison shoots into you as if from a syringe, making it much worse. You should use something like a finger nail, credit card or your postal ID badge and "flick" the stinger off of you. Live and learn.

Apologies for my trip down memory lane; my point is that you should go ahead and report **ALL** injuries, ***even if you are unsure of the severity and you do not require medical treatment.***

In summation, call management immediately or as soon as humanly possible if you are involved in a vehicle accident or you are injured — ***no matter the severity.*** Management might issue you discipline for your accident or injury but we will defend you vigorously in the grievance procedure.

If you fail to report the accident or injury immediately, or not at all, it is much more difficult to defend. Remember, the cover-up is almost always worse than the alleged crime.

Until next time, work safely! Follow the rules and the odds are excellent that you will not have any accidents or injuries to report. Problem solved.

This article has been abridged to fit the available space. The original article is courtesy of the Tri-Valley NALC Branch 2902 March-April 2017 *Mail Bag News*.

VETERANS IN ACTION

Veterans have served our great nation in so many ways. We have a saying: "Freedom is not free and All veterans have given some and some veterans have given all". We also say that we need to take care of our veterans. Most people agree, but there is great difference of opinion on how this is accomplished and to what extent. We live in a democracy, so we are involved in a political and social system. Most decisions are made in the interest of certain individuals or groups rather than

Bruce Hall **Veterans Representative**

all mankind. Greed and self-interest seems to govern many of these decisions. We would love to live in a world with freedom, peace, cooperation, goodwill, equality, consideration of others, and good quality of life. This can only be achieved if we work together as veterans to inform others and constantly convince our congress to do what's right when considering how to take proper care of our veterans.

We as veterans need to be active and vigilant in actions involving veterans. We need to constantly be in touch with our representatives and senators. There is a great deal of legislation being considered all the time concerning veterans. If you would like to get a weekly legislative newsletter updating legislative actions, please send your name, email, and zip code to Bruce Hall, 8017 N. Washburne Ave., Portland, Or, 97217, or email to vwfbruce@gmail.com. I can get you signed up for the VFW Action Corps Weekly. It is available to anyone who desires it. By receiving this information, you can then appropriately contact your legislators about legislation affecting veterans.

One of the biggest issues that affects the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration is proper funding. Congress needs to ensure that the funding appropriated is sufficient to take care of our uniformed and civilian personnel, maintain our readiness at the highest possible level, and sustain our technological advantages. Plus we need to take care of those who have served and need assistance. So contact your congressmen and request that they work together to provide funds to modify seques-

tration and maintain a good National Security, and also to take care of those who provide our national security through their service and sacrifice. Please contact your congressmen as soon as possible.

One way we can be active and support one another as veterans is to join a veteran's organization. Some that you might consider are:

American Legion

National Association of Black Veterans

Disabled American Veterans

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Paralysed Veterans of America

Vietnam Veterans of America

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Veterans of Underage Military Service

Besides these, most of the military services have associations that you can join. There is strength in unity. We need to join together to insure that everything possible is done to take proper care of our veterans. If you would like to become involved in any of these organizations or in programs that help veterans, please give me a call at 503-285-8468 or email me at vwfbruce@gmail.com.

We would like to help our own members and family members who are on active duty. If you are in the military or have family members on active duty, please let me know if you have any special needs or if there is any way that we can help you. We appreciate your service and would like to do all we can to support you. Also keep me updated on your status and where you are serving.

We want to thank all of our veterans for their service. Then we would like to encourage everyone to be active in our quest for the proper care of our veterans.

Article courtesy of the April 2017 Portland, Oregon NALC Branch 82 B-Mike

FROM THE NALC BRANCH 3126 VETERANS GROUP

DoD to Open Online Exchange Shopping to Veterans

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13, 2017 — The Defense Department announced today that veterans will soon be able to shop online at military exchanges.

The policy change will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military, DoD officials said in a [news release](#).

The shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2017.

While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families, the release said. The change follows careful analysis, coordination and strong public support, officials said in the release.

"We are excited to provide these benefits to honorably discharged veterans to recognize their service and welcome them home to their military family," said Peter Levine, performing the duties for the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "In addition, this initiative represents a low-risk, low-cost opportunity to help fund morale, welfare and recreation programs in support of service members' and their families' quality of life. And it's just the right thing to do," Levine added. The online benefit will also strengthen the exchanges' online businesses to better serve current patrons. Inclusion of honorably discharged veterans would conservatively double the exchanges' online presence, according to DoD officials, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments and improved efficiencies. "As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members," Levine said. "Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say, 'Thank you' to those who served with honor."

Can a disabled veteran be disciplined for absences while receiving medical treatment?

A disabled veteran who is directed to report for observation or treatment by a duly authorized medical authority must be granted leave and the absence cannot be used against the employee for disciplinary purposes.

This right to be absent from work to receive medical treatment without threat of discipline has its root in an Executive Order issued, by then President Herbert Hoover, in 1930 ([M-00165](#)):

Executive Order: Special Leaves of Absence to be Given Disabled Veterans in Need of Medical Treatment

With respect to medical treatment of disabled veterans who are employed in the executive civil service of the United States, it is hereby ordered that, upon the presentation of an official statement from duly constituted medical authority that medical treatment is required, such annual or sick leave as may be permitted by law and such leave without pay as may be necessary shall be granted by the proper supervisory officer to a disabled veteran in order that the veteran may receive such treatment, all without penalty in his efficiency rating.

The granting of such leave is contingent upon the veteran's giving prior notice of definite days and hours of absence required for medical treatment in order that arrangements may be made for carrying on the work during his absence.

Herbert Hoover' The White House, July 17, 1930.

In 1988, NALC and USPS agreed the 1930 Executive Order by President Hoover applied to disabled veterans who are letter carriers ([M-00866](#)).

Under these circumstances, the granting of such leave is contingent upon the veteran giving prior notice of definite days and hours of absence required. Additionally, the veteran is required to provide documentation to demonstrate the absence meets the qualifying requirements.

The requested leave can be annual leave, sick leave or leave without pay. Typically, when an employee request for leave without pay (LWOP) in lieu of paid leave (annual leave or sick leave) is granted, it is at the employer's discretion. However, requests for LWOP by qualifying disabled veterans for medical treatment is an exception and must be granted. This exception can be found in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*, Section 514.22:

514.22 Administrative Discretion

Each request for LWOP is examined closely, and a decision is made based on the needs of the employee, the needs of the Postal Service, and the cost to the Postal Service. The granting of LWOP is a matter of administrative discretion and is not granted on the employee's demand except as provided in collective bargaining agreements or as follows

a. A disabled veteran is entitled to LWOP, if necessary, for medical treatment.

Article courtesy of the April 2017 Madison Heights, Michigan NALC Branch 3126 *New Vision*

What You Don't Know Can Hurt You...



So, What is FMLA???

by Roxanne Luce, NALC Branch 133
Executive Vice President

Please request FMLA coverage!!!

Discipline for attendance is still high on Management's radar. Many of the discipline issues could have been — and should have been — covered by the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Why aren't they?

I hear reasons such as:

“Other people have worse attendance than I do.”

Those employees are probably covered by FMLA so they cannot be disciplined for those absences.

“My doctor didn't think I needed it yet.”

Your doctor is *not* the one who could be facing discipline up to to removal for your absence from work. **YOU ARE.**

If your circumstances qualify, get FMLA!

“I already have an FMLA case.”

So get two, get three, get whatever you need! You will still be protected for 12 weeks in the Postal leave year total — *even if you have multiple FMLA cases.*

“I was absent for my child's illness.”

You can take “Sick Leave for Dependant Care” *and* have it qualify for FMLA *if* the illness or injury meet the qualifications.

“I'm a CCA.”

If you have worked for the Postal Service for more than a year and have worked 1250 hours in the previous year, you qualify for FMLA protection. You meet the serious health condition qualifications.

“I thought it had to be something really serious.”

If it meets the qualifications as defined, it *is* considered serious.

“I just cut my hand open at home and got stitches.”

Did you have to go back to have the stitches removed? Were you given prescription antibiotics? You qualify for FMLA.

“I had oral surgery.”

Did you miss work and were you given prescription antibiotics? Then, you qualify.

“I got a Doctor's note for each absence.”

This does **NOT** protect you from any discipline for irregular attendance. Only FMLA can do that.

“I have an on-the-job injury, I didn't think I needed FMLA.”

Ever had a day you could not work due to your on-the-job injury and could not get into the doctor that same day? If yes, you need FMLA protection!

Under current law, to be eligible you must meet the following criteria for a serious health condition (this is taken from the ELM section 515.2).

Serious health condition — illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves any of the following:

(1) Hospital care — inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or subsequent treatment in connection with or subsequent to such inpatient care.

(2) Absence plus treatment — a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive full calendar days (including any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition) that also involves either one of the following:

(a) Treatment two or more times by a health care provider within 30 days of the first day of incapacity.

(b) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion within 7 days of the first day of incapacity that results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider. *(added by Roxanne this can be prescription medication)*

(3) Pregnancy — any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care.

(4) Chronic condition requiring treatments — a chronic condition that meets all of the three following conditions:

(a) Requires periodic visits (i.e., at least twice a year) for treatment by a health care provider or by a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider.

(b) Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition).

(c) May cause episodic, rather than a continuing period of, incapacity. Examples of such conditions include diabetes, asthma, and epilepsy.

(5) Permanent or long-term condition requiring supervision — a

period of incapacity that is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective. The employee or family member must be under the continuing supervision of, but need not be receiving active treatment by, a health care provider. Examples of such conditions include Alzheimer's, a severe stroke, and the terminal stages of a disease.

(6) Condition requiring multiple treatments (nonchronic condition) — any period of absence to receive multiple treatments (including any period of recovery there from) by a health care provider or by a provider of health care services under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider, either for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive full calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment.

Examples of such conditions include

cancer (which may require chemotherapy, radiation, etc.), severe arthritis (which may require physical therapy), and kidney disease (which may require dialysis).

I know that most of you are probably not going to make the time to read this. But, you need to realize that it is important...

There are other coverages under FMLA. The above only reflects the definition of a serious health condition.

If you have questions regarding your particular circumstance, please give me a call.

It is the Letter Carrier's responsibility to complete a PS Form 3971 (Leave Request) upon returning to work after an unscheduled absence, not management's.

Please stop just signing what is handed to you! If your condition might be covered under the FMLA, then make sure the 3971

indicates you are requesting FMLA coverage. I have seen Carriers leave 3971s *that they signed* agreeing they were AWOL *and* that the condition was not work-related when it was... **Protect yourself!!!**

READ IT. If the 3971 is not correct, tear it up. Request a blank one and complete it yourself! Better yet, ALWAYS complete it yourself instead of just taking one that the supervisor has printed out for you. Then, you know what it says when you sign it. Also — AND THIS MIGHT BE VERY IMPORTANT DOWN THE LINE — **ALWAYS** get a copy of the 3971 *with the supervisor's signature* that indicates that he/she received it.

Take care of yourself. Take care of your family. And, by doing this, you will also take care of your Brother and Sister Letter Carriers!

Article courtesy of the March 2017 *Swing Room Gazette* published by Sacramento, CA Branch 133

VP-ing

by Michelle Decker-Conrad,
NALC Branch 791 Vice President

Management has been questioning Carriers on the time spent for their lunch breaks. It usually starts with them questioning you why you were in the same place for 37-38 minutes.

Many of us are in the habit of replenishing our mail, and then start your lunch break. I am guilty of this habit. If this applies to you, the best thing to do is take your break, move to your next stop, and *then* replenish your mail.

Management is holding Carriers accountable for their time and you can expect to be questioned if your lunch lasts over 30 minutes.

Should you be stopped for directions or an unexpected traffic delaying you during your lunch break, make a note of these situations that are not a daily occurrence. If you plan to deviate from your authorized lunch locations, you should notify management of your intentions.

If you need to change and revise your PS Form 1564-A, you may revise your form as needed. You do not have to be new on a route to update your form. A restaurant may have changed owners and you do not like the food anymore, or the restaurant may have shut down. Or, a new restaurant may have opened up where you want to eat.

To avoid management questioning you, it would be in your best interest to change the 1564-A.

The time your lunch break starts is when you deviate from your line of travel.



Chartered April 6, 1901

Many do not consider travel time is included in your total lunch time — BUT IT IS — and lunch time ends when you start delivery again. This is why many Carriers bring their lunch and eat on their route to take advantage of the full 30 minutes.

What is a PS Form 1564-A?

It is a US Postal Service form, Delivery Instructions, and you can find the form inside your route book. If you have not updated your 1564-A, request a new form and provide the information.

In the 1564-A you will note time of authorized lunch, location of authorized lunch stop(s), and location where the Carrier is authorized to leave route for lunch. (See instructions on Form 1564-A where this applies.)

Similar information for any deviation for lunch by Carrier Technician (T-6) is entered on the Form 1564-A, also.

Article courtesy of the March 2017 *Monthly Report* published by Everett, WA Branch 791

Living in a CCA World?

by Chris Truppi,
CCA Coordinator
NALC Branch 2008

I am writing this month's article to all part time USPS Letter Carriers. I was recently promoted to full time status, after being a CCA for 2 years 7 months and 27 days.... but who's counting? As everyone told me, my time did come and I paid my dues along the way. I learned a lot about who I was as a person, a worker, a union member and a family man during this time. From this experience, this is what I have to say.....

To all CCA's..... my career started in the newly formed CCA position. I understand the fight and struggle of being a part time employee brings. As a husband with a wife, 3 children and a mortgage, being considered a part time employee is rough. The downfall of not having real a schedule is taxing to you and your family. The uncertainty in biweekly income puts even more pressure on you. I have been there. If you can take anything from me it's this:

Be invaluable. Be a professional carrier. Work hard. Get certified on every vehicle, get trained in every class you can. The more you can do the more you are needed. If hours get short, look to other facilities for hours. Make an impression. Your first day on the job with the USPS could be your last first day in your life. This can be your career. Take advice from the regulars; trust me they know more than you. Your time will come and it is most certainly worth it.

My second piece of advice is be involved. As many that attend the Union Branch 2008 meeting can attest, I have been vocal about issues with the CCA position. Some of the concerns came from me directly and some came from other CCA's I have encountered over the years. As CCA Coordinator I have taken many phone calls about different subjects. Many CCA's feel the pressure of this job. During my time as a CCA I also felt overwhelmed and unappreciated at times. There

OUT THERE



Originally published November 2008

was more than one occasion that I looked into other employment. Luckily my wife is very supportive, and fortunately I have a Union I can turn to. I can honestly and truly say, without question, that I would not have stuck it out without the Union. I got involved. I was fortunate enough to get training on the Union's behalf. I attend almost every meeting.

Attending the meetings was key for me. There were countless times I needed a boost in confidence. Just simply attending the meetings and being with my fellow Union brothers and sisters provided that boost. Everyone in the room deals with the same struggles at work, whether a Carrier or non career employee. It is a good place to hear that you are not alone. There is nothing better than a good support system and the Union has provided that to me.

The road is not easy and may take different time paths for each new carrier. But it's worth it. Keep your spirits high, work with pride and be involved. Your day shall come too.....

Article courtesy of the Tarpon Springs, Florida NALC Branch 2008
Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update published in March 2017

**If you don't know your
Rights, you don't have any...**

Don't Manipulate Data...

by David J. Grosskopf, Vice President
NALC Branch 3



Like most folks at work I have my routine. I come in and immediately check several different places for the latest news on things that affect letter carriers each morning. As many of you are aware I run a Facebook page called Buffalo/WNY Letter Carriers and help Administer a cite with fellow letter carriers called Letter Carriers of America. My social network footprint is one of many avenues I utilize to garner information. Check out Buffalo/WNY Letter Carriers for daily updates on a variety of topics that affect you as a letter carrier from the contract, to politics and everything in between.

A recent post caught my attention as the question was asked. "Is there a rule on a carrier signing for customers if the customer gives permission?" So let's examine some "rules" on signing for accountable and/or parcel items. From the M-41 City Delivery Carrier Duties and Responsibilities:

23 Data Collection of Special Services Mail

232 At Delivery Point

232.1 Delivery Events

At delivery point, scan/enter mailpiece or firm sheet barcode, and enter other appropriate information into the data collection device as required and instructed. If required, collect all customer signature and printed names on PS Form 3849, Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipts. The delivery address should be recorded on the barcoded side of PS Form 3849. Scan the barcode on PS Form 3849 after obtaining recipient signature and printed name.

232.2 Nondelivery Events

If the item cannot be delivered for any reason, scan the mailpiece barcode and enter other appropriate information into the data collection device as required and instructed. Leave completed PS Form 3849 for customer notification.

335.2 Leaving Notice

When delivery of numbered insured, registered, certified, or other special services articles cannot be made for any reason, complete and leave PS Form 3849, Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt. Endorse the article with the reason for nondelivery, such as *No Response*; enter route number and the date; initial on article; and return it to the delivery unit.

If you notice nowhere does it state that a carrier has permission to sign for a customer...? It instructs you what to do if you cannot complete delivery which fails to include signing for the customer, notify them via PS Form 3849. The instruction is clear, scan the mail piece and follow the scanners

instruction and/or supervisory instruction. Do not sign the IMD/MDD scanner screen to exact delivery believing you are doing the customer a favor. The sender has paid for a service to be rendered and in most cases that is getting the mail piece signed by the customer, not the carrier. With any rule there are extremely limited exceptions where a carrier can sign for a customer. With that being said, if you do not have permission from management **DO NOT SIGN** for any mail piece to exact delivery. I have handled removal cases in my position at DRT for carriers falsifying business records. If you manipulate data, for example MSP points, mail pieces that require signatures, DOL forms and things of the like, management may investigate and attempt to remove you from your position.

Remember we are the United States Postal **SERVICE**. Offer the customer exactly what our name and the rule(s) implies...service. The best possible service we can provide as professional letter carriers. This is how the USPS will be stay ahead of its competition and also this is how the NALC can collectively bargain for better wages and benefits for you. Remember we are paid, professional, unionized letter carriers and we are the "gold standard" when it comes to getting the job done efficiently, professionally, and safely. Remember that, take pride in that, defend that mantra not only from management, our competition, but also each other as carriers in the delivery arena. If we hold each other accountable for providing the best possible service to our customer's management won't have the opportunity, for example, to discipline carriers as we have taught each other the right way to get the job done.

Article courtesy of the Buffalo, New York
NALC Branch 3 BUZZ published in February 2017

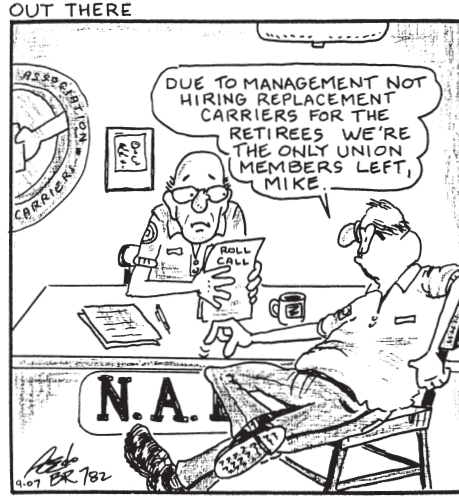
OUT THERE



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 ...



Originally published April 2009



Originally published April 2009



Originally published May 2009



Originally published May 2009



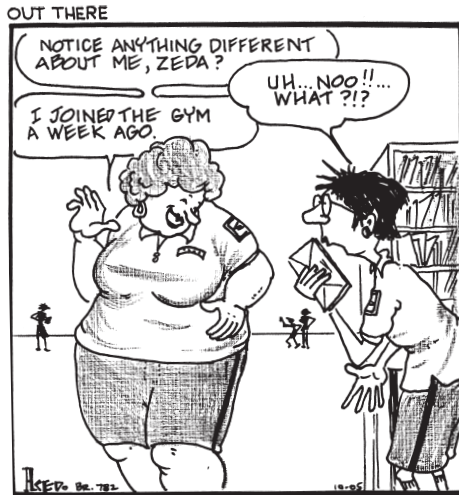
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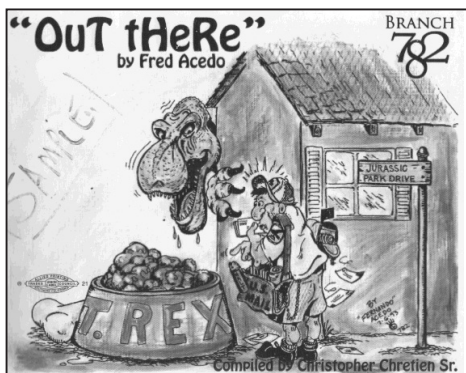
Fred Acedo is the NALC Branch 782 Special Assistant Newsletter Editor (S.A.N.E.). His original book, **Out tHeRe**, featured cartoons from 1993 to 2002. The *NALC Editor Resource Book* serves as Volume II in Fred's body of work for our Branch from 2003 through July 2016. Together, the two books incorporate almost 1600 illustrations that we published over the course of twenty-three years!

More importantly, the Resource Book is a clip-art asset designed for NALC newsletter editors.

As an incentive to buy the *NALC Editor Resource Book* (Volume II of the cartoons), you will find the original **Out tHeRe** book included with your order, Gratis! (That means *FREE!!!*)

Dear Kim Gerdes, NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary 2628 F St. Bakersfield, CA 93301-1816

Please send me _____ **Out tHeRe** book (s)! Items mailed via USPS Priority Flat Rate.



Name and address for shipping:

Each book is \$7.00 But you can get two for \$10.00!

Why could you use more than one? The books make great picnic prizes meeting raffle prizes, for MDA or for other projects. Buy one as a Christmas present for your T-6! Buy a copy for a retiring Branch officer! Buy one for your library! Buy one to help us out! **Postage for up to 4 books: \$6.65; 5 - 7 books \$7.20. Larger order? Call me!!**

Please make out your checks for your copy/copies of Out tHeRe payable to NALC Branch 782 and mail them to Kim Gerdes!

Dear Basil Zuniga, NALC Branch 782 Editor-guy 2628 F St. Bakersfield, CA 93301-1816

Please send me one or more *NALC Editor Resource Book* (s)!

Base cost is **\$30** but you can donate more... it will help offset the costs to print the original book.

A: Resource Book _____ X \$30.00 = _____

B: \$7.00 **Out tHeRe** book X FREE = **FREE!!!**

C: \$6.65 Flat Rate Priority Mail Postage

A + B + C

Amount due with order

Please let me know if this order is for an NALC Branch Editor!!!

Make checks for "NALC Editor Resource Book" payable to Basil Zuniga, NALC Branch 782 Editor-guy. Orders printed when received.

IN MEMORIUM

Jesse "Chusie" Avalos

September 12, 1938 – March 9, 2017

The passing of Chusie Avalos marked a milestone for all of his family members. It should also be noted that his story is also a look at the history of Branch 782 and of the Postal Service itself.

Remembering and honoring Chusie pays homage to an entire generation of individuals who paved the way for an improved life for those of us who followed.

Jesse started his postal career in 1957. Seeds of change which led to the postal strike in 1970 were already beginning to bloom. As is noted in *Carriers in a Common Cause*, a 1956 "Postal Record" reported that "the average American family" earned \$5,520 a year before taxes while the average Letter Carrier earned \$4,400 — \$1,120 a year less..."

In 1957, it had been four years since there had been a \$400 pay raise. And, there would be no pay raise until 1960. Why? Because any pay raises had to be approved by Congress. Since there was no collective agreement or Contract in place, Letter Carriers were forced to rely on "collective begging".

Additionally, changes to the duties of Letter Carriers had been instituted by PMGs Donaldson and Summerfield as they pursued a strategy of keeping postal wages as low as possible.

As indicated in another passage from *Carriers in a Common Cause*, "By 1960, Letter Carriers were having serious financial difficulties. A substantial number of them could not even qualify for an FHA loan to buy a home..." Carriers mounted a campaign to lobby Congress on their behalf and a pay bill was passed in June. But, President "Eisenhower, in his last year as president, vetoed the legislation... NALC lobbied firecely for a veto override and was victorious. On July, 1, 1960, Congress overwhelmingly overrode the veto — **one of only two of the 169 vetoes to be overridden in eight years...**"

To accomplish such a feat was not something that would have been attempted by someone who was feeble or who would be easily cowed. Although Jesse was serving his country in the United States Army at that time, after his discharge he returned to find a situation that required his willingness to continue the fight for Rights and Benefits he felt were his due!



(left to right) Bertha and Tony Chavez, Ann and Richard Suniga, Chusie and Mary Lou Avalos, John and Penny Wonderly as Branch 782 and Auxiliary 458 delegates to a national convention in 1982. While the photographer isn't known, it may very well have been taken by John Ross.

Through 1949, Carriers had no health insurance because those benefits were not provided for any federal workers. **In 1950, the NALC created its own Health Benefit Program** — that action by NALC Letter Carriers led the way to passage of the Federal Employee Benefits Act of 1959.

We have Jesse and his generation to thank for so very much we may take for granted.

Obviously, where we work today is an entirely different organization than the one where Jesse Avalos found himself in the mid-1950s. If you listen to some of the stories from people who were there, you wonder how they would get away with some of the things that they did.

Disputes between co-workers were often settled "out on the back dock". And, given Chusie's temperament, he wouldn't shy away from situations where he felt that he had been wronged. Accounts of how he would offer "attitude adjustments" were shared at his funeral by the many, now-retired, postal workers in attendance.

One time, Jesse came in from the street. His shirt was torn and he looked a little scuffed. Asked what happened he replied, "I had a problem with a dog. The owner called me an S.O.B. and I couldn't let that go!" That same spirit led him to resolve issues at Branch meetings or picnics that required his special attention. Size or number of opponents didn't matter to him.

Moreover, there were countless tales of how Jesse's generosity and willingness to help others were part of his nature as well. It is perhaps because he was so willing to give of himself that others also invested themselves in his life.

Chusie's story is woven into the history of NALC Branch 782. Here is one perfect example which illustrates that.

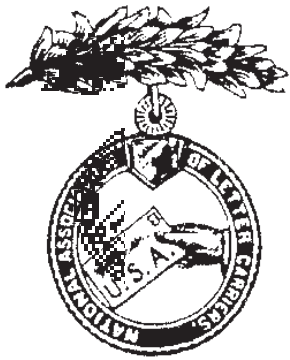
After he added an extra living area to the back of his home, he built an entire second floor. And, he did this with the help of many of his co-workers. One Letter Carrier who showed up to work and drink beer with everybody else as they gathered was Ed "E.A." Baker. ("**E.A.**" is the individual for whom our newsletter is named!)

"E.A." (the Reverend) and Chusie would conduct "bible studies" while sipping from their Budweisers during construction.

One day, while working upstairs, he told Jesse that he wasn't feeling well. Taken to the hospital, it was found that he had had a heart attack, and while there, he kept trying to tell others how they had to finish the NALC newsletter. He died there.

The Avalos family know that the ghostly footsteps they hear upstairs are "E.A." and they smile. He and Jesse are probably going to be finishing that bible study...

BASIL ZUNIGA



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

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

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

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

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

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

In the hope that material contained 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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www.782nalc.com**

Rick Plummer, Webmaster



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General Meeting Wednesday April 26, 2017 7:00 p.m.

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Bakersfield, California

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

Our General Meetings will now be held on the 4th Wednesday of each month...except in the months of November and December.

"OuT tHeRe"



Each and EVERY month,
Branch 782 sponsors
a drawing to encourage

YOU

to come to our Meeting*

*Art Mooney was the
winner in March 2017!*

This month YOU could win \$50!

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

If you're here, you found the web version... More pages. More "Schuff". More "Amore" for Letter Carriers!!!