

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

### E.A. Baker Union Update



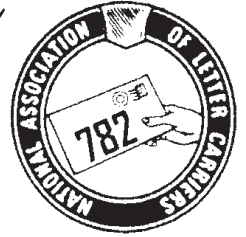
ARVIN  
CALIFORNIA CITY  
McFARLAND  
TAFT

AVENAL  
DELANO  
MOJAVE  
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST  
TRONA

BORON  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
WASCO

**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901**



NUMBER 6

WEB VERSION

JUNE 2018

# Don't Drink the Kool-aid...

Do not be lulled into thinking that YOU won't be impacted by what the current Administration plans for YOUR benefits. You may be wondering... "What plans?"

Increase of CSRS and FERS Average Pay Period to Five Years would be a major impact.

And, what about Increased Contributions to Federal Employees Retirement System; Elimination of Federal Employees' Retirement System Annuity Supplements; Reduction or Elimination of Retirement Cost-of-Living Adjustments? None of the proposals would provide any increased benefits to YOU.

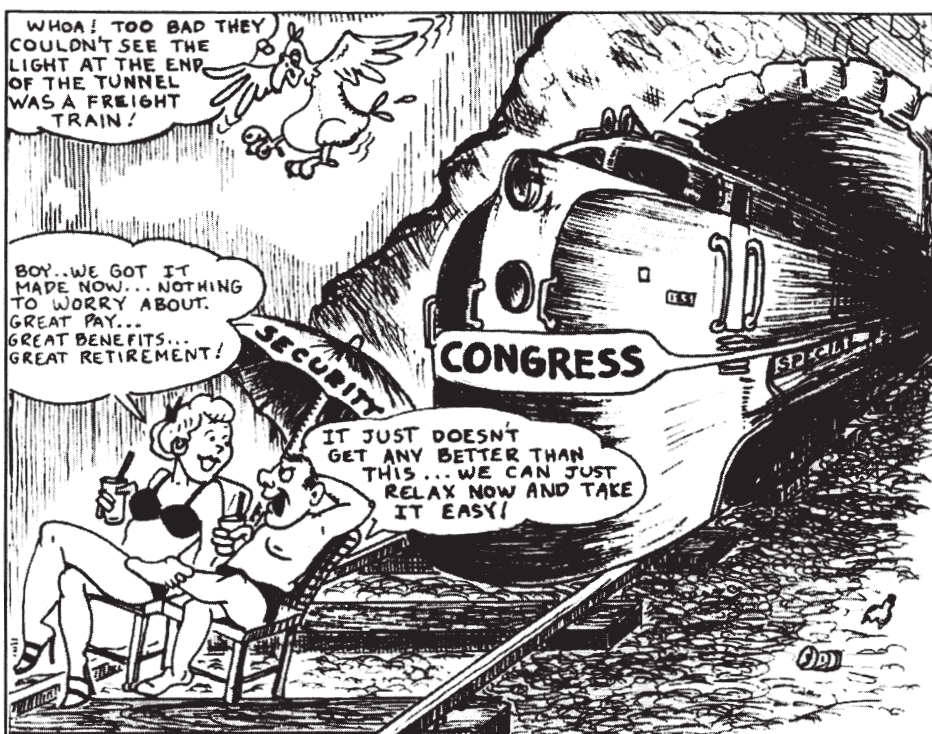
## DON'T BELIEVE IT?

See pages 6-8 for the actual May 4, 2018 transmittal letter from OMB to the Speaker of the House for specific details.

The enclosures cite "budget implications".

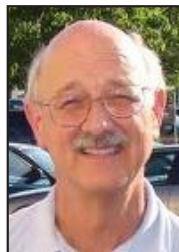
For **YOUR** budget – yes, there will indeed be a number of implications...

**Out there** Cartoon originally published in the Branch 782 newsletter in 1995.



at the

# Mike:



We have a CCA in California City who's found out he has cancer.

You can help at GoFundMe!

I thought something should be put in the newsletter...

To donate, go to "Stevie's Fight" on the GoFundMe page.

If you decide to help, you can make a great difference in his life!

To join in this fight, check out the following link for the information and instructions on how someone can donate.

<https://dm2.gofund.me/stevie039s-fight>  
Steve Ivory, a City Carrier Assistant in California City, is fighting cancer.

"He is the only income in the family and has found out he is not eligible for any aid. He can't get SDI because the Post Office does not pay into it. He has tried to get help from all federal and state programs but does not qualify for anything.

Instead of concentrating on getting well, he worries how he can make all the co-pays, deductibles, and the house payments.

He has worked his whole life and has never needed assistance, but now he has been told he will be out of work for at least 6 months. He is a natural-born American citizen, and there is nothing for him. He has nowhere to turn.

Some of the Meds are over \$200.00 and co-pays are \$150.00. For six weeks, he has to drive over 50 miles every day for chemo and radiation then 50 miles home...with surgery and then more chemo. Where he lives, gasoline is \$3.99 a gallon.



**If anyone knows of any help anywhere, it would be so helpful!**

He's already checked Social Security, EDD, SDI, 'Keep Your Home California' — but all to no avail.

He had enough money to pay last month's and this month's bills; but, he is in a panic about the next four months...

***Any donations will help him!***

He is an honest, hard working man who raised four children and who deserves help. Please help ease his mind so he can heal his body and not give up. Prayers are also appreciated."

I want to note that California Shop Steward Ryan Gerstl is the person who let me know what was happening with Steve. Thank You, Ryan!

**MIKE TOWERY**  
NALC Branch 782 President

# Mail carrier battling cancer delivers hope to fellow patient on her route

**A** mail carrier who has been fighting breast cancer for the last 7 years delivered a surprise at one of the houses along her route after hearing that a resident was dealt a similar diagnosis.



Michele Slack planted set up a “Hearts of Hope” garden at one of the houses along her route. (Fox 9)

“My battle started seven years ago and I was just diagnosed with retinal cancer in January, which metastasized from my breast cancer,” Michele Slack, a 13-year Letter Carrier in Minneapolis, told Fox 9. “Odds are, it’ll be back again at another point. There aren’t too many people that haven’t been impacted in some level by cancer.”

Slack stopped by Laura Stegenga’s house after discovering that the mother-of-two was diagnosed with breast cancer that had metastasized. Stegenga said her diagnosis came after her chiropractor discovered lesions on her spine. She was told that she would likely be dealing with some form of cancer throughout her life, Fox 9 reported.

“She said she just felt hopeless,” Slack told Fox 9. “It just sort of ate at me, because hope and positive thinking in my belief has a lot to do with healing and overcoming a serious illness.”

While Stegenga was at chemo and her children were at school, Slack set to planting a “Hearts of Hope” garden in her front yard. It included a chalk message of hope on her driveway, and 101 heart-shaped balloons, Fox 9 reported.

“It was a surprise for everyone,” Slack said.

The two are now on a campaign to raises awareness for other women, and to show how powerful support from others can be.

“I know how much it means to have the visual aspect of the support that this many people are there for you and are willing to help in any way,” Slack told Fox 9. “You try to be strong for everyone and inside you’re battling with your own emotions. I wish more people would do it for people that are going through difficult times.”

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2017/09/18/mail-carrier-battling-cancer-delivers-hope-to-fellow-patient-on-her-route.html>

**...many people  
are there for you...**

*Michele Slack, NALC Branch 9  
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

When **someone**  
has cancer, the  
whole **family** and  
everyone who **loves**  
them does, too.

-Terri Clark



**someday is today**™

# Minutes of the May 2018 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery, at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd day of May, 2018 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. at Arms, David Treto. All members of the Executive Board were present except Financial Secretary, Anita Holderman and Trustee, Darryl Holderman. The stewards were present from Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; Assistant Treasurer, Debbie Guillet; Assistant Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer; Assistant Financial Secretary, Lucinda Martinez; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes and Paul Greenfield of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the April 25, 2018 meeting were read by Asst. Recording Secretary, Norma Hamer and accepted with no additions or corrections

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Applications were received from Jestine Bennett, Mojave; Ryan Woommavovah, Brundage and Reva R. Coe, Dole Ct.

**REPORTS OF SPECIAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES:**

Teresa Ortega had nothing new to report regarding the Picnic. Basil Zuniga reported last month East Bakersfield and Brundage combined to fold the newsletter. He received some Food Drive photos from Norma Hamer for the AO's. He informed members that the final numbers for the Food Drive were not available before the newsletter went to the printer. The final numbers are on the web version. The Food Bank weighed the collected food from East, Brundage and Hillcrest together. He discussed the some of the articles. Mike Towery discussed what an excellent job Basil did on the memorial issue for Frank Martinez. Mike also thanked Basil for the article he did about him. Paul Greenfield reported that the Social and Recreation Committee did not meet this month. They will meet next month. They will vote on the purchase of Dodger tickets for July 1st against the Rockies. There will be 30 lodge tickets and 30 "all you can eat" tickets. He asked that members let him know if there is anything they want him to bring up at the meeting. Also let him know if you have someone retiring, the Social and Recreation Committee will buy a cake for the office. Mike asked the members if they were interested in serving on the Committee. Kim Gerdes reported that 6 books were sold, 607 books remaining.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Mike Towery reported that he is still working with the new tenant on the lease agreement, still need some documents before the lease can be signed. Paul Greenfield will bring the plaque for Frank Martinez up at the Social and Recreation Committee meeting, Brundage took up a collection for the plaque for their office.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Molly Biggar submitted the new budget; a vote will be taken at the June meeting.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** John Ortega reported that the branch was presented a "2017 Organization Award" for being 95.3% organized and also a "Certificate of Achievement" for fundraising for MDA. John presented the certificate to Norma Hamer and thanked her for all her work raising money for MDA. Mike Towery also thanked Norma, he then reported that the total of 116,750 pounds of food was collected during the Food Drive. Art Mooney donated a letter carrier jacket to the branch. He estimates it is about 50 years old.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Assistant Financial Secretary, Lucinda Martinez reported that \$13,583.41 was collected for the month of May.

**TREASURERS REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$67,006.61
Dues and Income	\$19,177.99
Total Balance	\$86,184.60
Total Expenses	\$14,705.32
Ending Balance	\$71,479.38

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Jerry Patterson. (\$14.50/\$14.50)

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

There were 35 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

KIM GERDES

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

*This month  
YOU could win \$500!*

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

## Non-Members April 2018\*

\*CCA names are in italics

**Downtown Station**  
Sarah Kirby  
Javier Cruz

**South Station**  
Daniel Zuniga  
Marty Martinez

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

**Hillcrest**  
*100% UNION!!!*

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

**Stockdale**  
James Oh

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

**Arvin**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**Avenal**  
*100% UNION!!!*

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

**Delano**  
Cynthia V. Quebral  
Daniela Barreto

**Lamont**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**Edwards AFB**  
Varline Reeder

**Mojave**  
Alexander Keller

**Ridgecrest**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**Ridgecrest**  
M. D. Voights  
L. M. New

**Taft**  
K. J. Kaczmarek

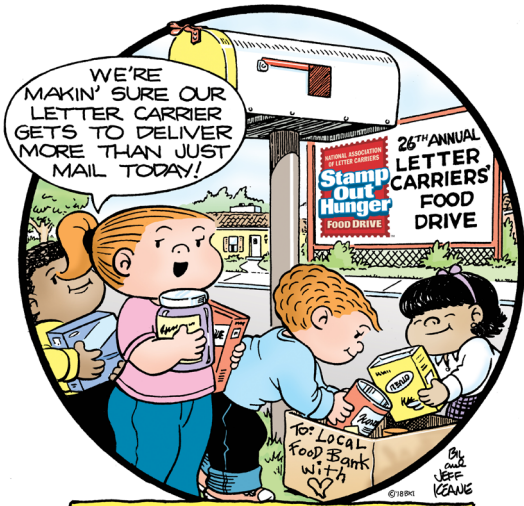
**Tehachapi**  
B. C. Den Beeman

**Trona**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**Wasco**  
*100% UNION!!!*

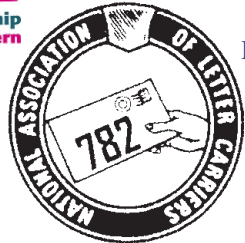
*There are only 13  
non-members in all  
of the cities we serve...  
Two of them are CCAs.*

# Our Success is: *Because of YOU...*



## 118,215 pounds!!

**SAT., MAY 12, 2018**



	2018	2017	2016	2015
Arvin (93203)	450	536	255	275
Avenal (93204)	1,272	1,190	800	2,100
Delano (93215)	4,500	4,928	3,756	2,594
Lamont (93241)	550	413	300	510
McFarland (93250)	1,286	1,073	536	325
Shafter (93263)	2,359	4,651	4,631	5,146
Taft (93268)	8,308	6,474	4,500	1,600
Wasco (93280)	570	2,694	3,216	3,614
Downtown Station (93301)	1,963	2,651	2,694	2,381
South Station (93304)	7,815*	7,772	9,743	9,417
East Brundage (93305/07)	9,101*	9,212	10,276	10,955
Hillcrest Station (93306)	11,010*	9,394	11,068	11,106
Dole Court (93308/12/14)	18,955	17,143	24,520	24,107
Stockdale Station (93309)	11,653	11,431	13,620	13,943
Camino Media (93311/13)	6,762	5,614	6,638	6,194
Mojave (93501)	550	700	347	1,395
California City (93504)	2,200	1,100	825	2,600
Boron (93516)	334	422	391	850
Edwards AF Base (93523)	402	536	403	1,072
Tehachapi (93561)	3,800	2,465	2,465	1,200
Ridgecrest (93555)	24,200	11,500	13,760	12,600
Trona (93562)	175	450	---	1,550

**Totals: 118,215 102,354 114,714 115,534**

\* Adjusted amounts provided by Community Action Partnership of Kern 6/11/18

On the morning of May 14th, there was a little competition going on at Bakersfield's South Station. I'm sure that the four contestants — two



Carriers and two Clerks — spent most of their Sunday perfecting their special recipe of chili for a



District sponsored cookoff! As the station had morning break, a table was set up to sample the four different chilis. Crackers and cornbread, bowl and spoon were on hand for all.



We were asked to taste with the direction, "Pick Your Favorite". In the competition, along with clerks Hana Sawires and Aaron Epperson, were Christine Leal, Route #406 and also Kellie Martinez, Route #415. All of the chili dishes were good. **In fact, there was a tie for first place!!** What to do...? *WELL, LET'S HAVE A TIEBREAK.* When CCA Christina Scott came in at 0900, she was asked to taste, cast her vote, and break the tie.

Kellie was first runner up and Hana is going on to represent South Station at District (Sierra Coastal) level competition. Congratulations to all, thanks for lunch and Good Luck to Hana!!

ANITA HOLDERMAN  
93304 Carrier



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

May 4, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I have enclosed legislative proposals for consideration of the Congress. OPM is responsible for administering the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) under chapters 83 and 84 of title 5, United States Code, respectively. These programs serve nearly 2.6 million Federal retirees and survivors who receive monthly annuity payments. These legislative proposals would amend chapters 83 and 84 of title 5, United States Code, to bring Federal benefits more in line with the private sector.

The legislative proposals included in this transmittal are as follows:

- **Elimination of Federal Employees' Retirement System Annuity Supplements**

This proposal would amend section 8421 of title 5, United States Code, to eliminate the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) annuity supplement for new retirees and the supplementary annuity for survivor annuitants. The proposal retains language that requires OPM to apportion a FERS annuity supplement to a former spouse when a court order expressly divides a FERS annuity for purposes of annuitants who retain a FERS annuity supplement under prior provisions of section 8421. Also, the proposal retains language that requires OPM to reduce or eliminate an annuitant's FERS annuity supplement based on earnings for those who retain FERS annuity supplements under prior provisions.

- **Increase of CSRS and FERS Average Pay Period to Five Years**

This proposal would amend sections 8331(4) and 8401(3) of title 5, United States Code, to increase the period of service used to compute an annuitant's average salary under the Civil Service Retirement System and Federal Employees' Retirement System by averaging an employee's basic pay in effect over a five-year consecutive pay period rather than over a three-year consecutive pay period as is required under current law.

- **Increased Contributions to Federal Employees Retirement System**

This proposal amends parts of section 8422 of title 5, United States Code, to increase the employee deduction rates for the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). The rate increase will be one percent per year until the employee is contributing half of the current regular FERS employee normal cost percentage.

Currently, most employees pay 0.8 percent of basic pay as the FERS employee retirement deduction. Some groups (Members of Congress, congressional staff, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and others) pay an additional one half of one percent (1.3%) of basic pay. Employees hired after 2012 pay a higher employee deduction rate, 3.1 or 4.4 percent depending on when first hired. Under this proposal, FERS employee deduction rates will increase by 1 percent per year until they reach 7.25 percent of basic pay.

FERS is a fully funded system with the “normal cost” of benefits paid through employee deductions and agency contributions. The FERS normal cost percentage is an estimate of the percentage of pay that must be contributed for a group of employees over their entire working careers in order to fully pay for their FERS basic retirement benefits. The normal cost must be computed by OPM in accordance with generally accepted actuarial practices and standards (using dynamic assumptions). The normal cost calculations depend on economic and demographic assumptions. Subpart D of part 841 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, regulates how normal costs are determined. OPM generally revises the FERS normal cost percentage every three years. The employing agency contribution is the FERS normal cost percentage minus the employee deduction rate. Employee groups that receive enhanced retirement benefits (such as law enforcement officers) or are able to retire under other special provisions (such as air traffic controllers) have a higher normal cost percentage.

This proposal would require FERS employees to fund a greater portion of their retirement benefit. The current normal cost percentage for regular FERS employees is 14.5 percent. Regular employees will reach a 7.25 percent deduction rate (one-half of the current normal cost rate) on October 1, 2024, paying an equal share of their normal cost with their employer. Deduction rates are scheduled to increase by one percent per fiscal year, with any remainder less than 1 percent in the final year of the schedule. Because of the differences in deductions paid by employee groups, the various groups will reach the end of scheduled increases at various times ranging from October 1, 2020, to October 1, 2024, when a regular FERS employee will have half of the normal cost percentage withheld from basic pay for retirement (currently 7.25). After October 1, 2024, when the normal cost percentage fluctuates up or down, the employee deduction will also change so that it remains at half of the normal cost percentage for regular FERS employees. For non-regular employees, the employee deduction rate under this proposal is fixed at half of the normal cost percentage for regular FERS employees. Therefore, these non-regular employees will pay less than half the normal cost of their FERS retirement benefit.

- **Reduction or Elimination of Retirement Cost-of-Living Adjustments**

This proposal would amend sections 8340 and 8462 of title 5, United States Code, to reduce the cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) by one half of one percent and to eliminate COLAs under the Federal Employees’ Retirement System (FERS) for current and future retirees.

The proposal would retain the provisions requiring OPM to update a FERS disability annuitant’s average salary by all COLAs payable for the period during which the annuitant was receiving a disability annuity when the annuity is redetermined at age 62; however, CSRS COLAs would be used in lieu of the FERS COLAs after those COLAs are eliminated.

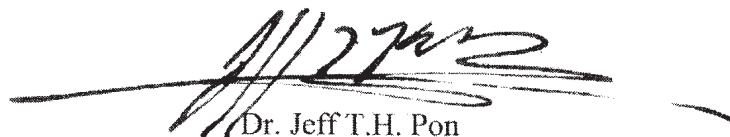
The amendments would eliminate the provision requiring a reduction to an annuitant's FERS disability annuity by the amount of the annuitant's Social Security "assumed disability insurance benefit," and would require the reduction to be based on an annuitant's actual Social Security disability benefit. Under current law, a FERS disability benefit computed under section 8452(a) of title 5, United States Code, is reduced by the "assumed disability insurance benefit" when the annuitant is entitled to a Social Security disability insurance (SSDI) benefit. The assumed disability insurance benefit differs from the annuitant's actual Social Security disability insurance (SSDI) benefit because the assumed disability insurance benefit is based on the SSDI benefit amount increased by FERS COLAs, whereas the actual Social Security disability insurance benefit is updated by CPI increases. With the elimination of FERS COLAs the reduction for SSDI would be based on the actual amount of the SSDI benefit.

The FERS Basic Employee Death Benefit and child annuities would be updated by CSRS COLAs, albeit at the reduced COLA rate proposed under the amended COLA provisions.

In summary, the employee retirement landscape continues to evolve as private companies are providing less compensation in the form of retirement benefits. The shift away from defined-benefit programs and cost-of-living adjustments for annuitants is part of that evolution. By comparison, the Federal Government continues to offer a generous package of retirement benefits. Consistent with the goal of bringing Federal retirement benefits more in line with the private sector, adjustments to reduce the long term costs associated with these benefits are included in these proposals. OPM estimates that the interactive savings of enacting these proposals together to be \$143,509,000,000 over ten years. I urge the Congress to give prompt and favorable consideration to these legislative proposals.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has advised there is no objection to the transmittal of these legislative proposals to the Congress and that their enactment would be in accord with the program of the President. OMB further advises that it is willing to work with the Congress to ensure deficit savings are realized from the proposal to increase the contributions of Federal employees and reduce the agency share of such costs by enacting legislation to reduce the non-defense discretionary caps starting in Fiscal Year 2019, as outlined in the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jeff T.H. Pon  
Director

Enclosures

To see the 20 page letter with all of the enclosures, put the following address in your search bar:  
<https://www.afge.org/globalassets/documents/generalreports/2018/opm-legislative-proposal-csrs-and-fers-updates.pdf>



# *Letter Carriers need to donate to the LCPF to save our Retirement Benefits!*

By Richard Drolet, Second Vice President,  
NALC Southeast Massachusetts Merged Branch 18

**S**everal years ago, our union started the “Gimme \$5” program to encourage people to donate \$5 per pay period to help support our political work necessary to save our benefits! The examples below show that the need to do so has even gotten greater. It’s time for Letter Carriers to step up and voluntarily donate to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) so we can better protect our rights and benefits!! This money is used to help candidates and elected officials who help Letter Carriers — regardless of political party. The money generated by the LCPF is also used to help pay those Letter Carriers released to work on political campaigns while they are not in uniform and not on the clock.

With that said, ALL Letter Carriers need to be aware of what has happened in the past and what might be coming at us in the future... Let me develop some context for answers to this next question:

**“What cuts to our benefits have already been made or are being proposed by President Trump and the Republican Party leadership currently in control of Congress??”**

Letter Carriers **hired prior to December 31, 2012 currently pay 0.8% (\$19.23 per pay period at the top of our pay scale)** toward our basic pension benefits.

**Carriers hired after that date now have to pay 3.1% of their pay** as part of the “Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act”. So at the top pay rate in today’s dollars, each of these Carriers would have to pay **\$74.51 per pay period**.

Then in 2014, the “Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013” raised the rate for newly hired **federal employees hired after Jan. 1, 2014 pay 4.4%**! So those **NEWER CARRIERS PAY \$105.76** in today’s dollars!

***THOSE TWO HITS THAT NEWLY HIRED LETTER CARRIERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBJECTED TO WILL NOT RAISE THEIR PENSIONS AT ALL!***

We need more contributions to the Letter Carriers Political Fund to make us more effective in stopping these attacks on our benefits! But it doesn’t end there. Think about the question I raised earlier...

**“What cuts to our benefits have already been made or are being proposed by President Trump and the Republican Party leadership currently in control of Congress??”**

***President Trump’s budget proposals would raise the rate that ALL postal and federal employees have to pay to 6.45% of their base pay over the next 6 years toward their pensions. This will cost active Letter Carriers up to \$3,600 per year while not increasing our pensions by one dime!***

That change would effectively eliminate the 5% match by the USPS if Letter Carriers agree to set aside 5% per year toward their retirement.

***AND, THERE IS MORE...KEEP READING!***

## President Trump's budget proposal **ELIMINATES COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLAA) FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE RETIREES UNDER THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM (FERS).**

**If this proposal became law, the average FERS annuitant – which means most of us -- would lose: \$23,400 over 10 years; \$99,471 over 20 years; and \$246,185 over 30 years once retired!**

**Trump also proposed reducing COLAs for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants by one-half of 1 percent (0.5 percent) EACH YEAR, which would cost each of them: \$12,598 over 10 years; \$60,576 over 20 years; and \$169,874 over 30 years!**

But that's not all that is at stake! *President Trump's budget proposes \$46 Billion in cuts and revenue changes to the Postal Service — most likely reducing the frequency of delivery by eliminating Saturday delivery and scaling back other delivery.*

***THIS IS YOUR JOB AND YOUR ROUTE THEY ARE ATTACKING!***

His budget also slashes the rate of interest paid on assets invested in the Thrift Savings Plan Government Securities Fund (G Fund), costing active and retired Letter Carriers alike \$32 Billion over 10 years! Once again, that's YOUR money!

***Trump's budget also reduces CSRS and FERS pension benefits for new retirees by basing annuities on employees' highest average pay over five years (High 5) instead of over three years (High 3).***

He also wants to eliminate the FERS Special Annuity Supplement for FERS employees who need to retire before the age of 62. *If the supplement is eliminated through Legislation, here is what you would lose if you retired at age 56 with 30 years of career federal/postal service: approximately \$12,000 per year, over a 6 year period, which would cost those employees upwards of \$72,000 over that period. In many instances, that would prevent employees from retiring because they couldn't afford to lose that \$12,000+ FERS Special Annuity Supplement per year!*

**So what is the NALC asking each of us to contribute to try to prevent these drastic cuts in our benefits? \$5 per pay period, which is \$130/year. Over a 30 year career, that comes to \$3,900! As someone who has been donating \$6.00 per pay period, I consider this a bargain for us – given how much we have to lose if we can't prevent these cuts in our retirement benefits!**

When the NALC asks you to step up and help protect our benefits, I know most of you will realize what a bargain we are getting by doing what our Association asks us to do!

***PLEASE DONATE TO THE LETTER CARRIERS POLITICAL FUND TODAY!***

I thank the NALC for providing us with this information during a slide show presentation made at the March NALC New England Regional RAP Session held in Providence, Rhode Island in the spring of 2018!

*"The Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) will use money that it receives at the national and local levels to contribute to and otherwise assist candidates for federal office who favor legislation in the interest of the NALC, without regard to their party affiliation, and to undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the LCPF from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, staff, or their immediate families living in the same household. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any monetary guideline included with the solicitation amount is merely a suggestion – an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the NALC will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal."*



# SIGN ME UP!

## How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using PostalEASE — ONLINE Enrollment

Through PostalEASE, active letter carriers can contribute directly from their USPS paychecks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC’s PAC) by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll “allotments.”

### Online Enrollment

1. Login to USPS’s Postal Ease website at <https://ewss.usps.gov>  
You may also get to the Postal Ease website through the USPS LiteBlue website See the instructions below
2. Click “I agree”
3. Enter your Employee ID number and Password and click “Submit”  
If you have not yet set up a password click the link provided on the page or go to:  
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/welcome.xhtml>  
If you forgot your password click the link provided on the page or go to:  
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/einVerification.xhtml>
4. Under Payroll click “Allotments / Payroll Net To Bank”
5. Click “Continue”
6. Click “Allotments”
7. Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
8. Enter your 17-digit Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5  
*See instructions in step D at right*
9. Enter Account type as “checking”
10. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000*
11. Click VALIDATE
12. Click SUBMIT
13. Print or write down your confirmation number for your records

#### BEFORE YOU START, YOU’LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS password
- C. Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number). See the example below.



- D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces below:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5

#### To get to Postal Ease through Lite Blue:

- Got to [www.liteblue.usps.gov](http://www.liteblue.usps.gov)
- Enter you employee ID and Password and click “Log On”
- Click “My HR”
- Click “Employee Apps”
- Click “PoastalEASE”
- Begin at step 1 above

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor.



# SIGN ME UP!

## How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using PostalEASE — Enroll by PHONE

Through PostalEASE, active letter carriers can contribute directly from their USPS paychecks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll "allotments."

### ENROLLMENT BY PHONE

Call PostalEASE toll-free at 1.877.4PS.EASE (1.877.477.3273)

1. When prompted, select "1" for PostalEASE
2. Enter your 8-digit Employee ID Number and your USPS 4-digit PIN
3. Select "2" for payroll options
4. Select "1" for allotments  
*Disregard instruction to complete Allotment Worksheet and select "2" to continue.*
5. Select "3" to ADD a new allotment
6. Enter the following Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
7. Select "1" to continue processing allotment
8. Select "1" to "enter the allotment now"
9. Enter your 17-digit Account Number (See step D at left)
10. Enter "1" for Checking
11. Enter amount of allotment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ / pay period  
*Maximum yearly amount is \$5,000*
12. If amount is correct, select "1"

NOTE: If you already have three allotments, you must cancel one to contribute to the Political Fund through PostalEASE. To do so, follow the instructions above but instead of selecting "3" to add a new allotment, select "2" to cancel an allotment.

After completing your entry, stay on the phone for the following information:

Confirmation Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your allotment will become effective on: \_\_\_\_\_

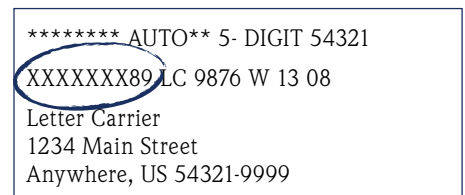
Your allotment will be reflected in paycheck dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Keep this information for your records and future reference.

#### BEFORE YOU START, YOU'LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS PIN
- C. Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. **Or** call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number).

Your Postal Record Number is on the cover of NALC's monthly magazine:



- D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces below:

\_\_\_\_\_ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor.



# SIGN ME UP!

## How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER

Through a **MONTHLY** Electronic Fund Transfer, NALC members can contribute directly from their bank account to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC). On the 1st of every month, the Political Fund will automatically (and without a fee) deduct from your bank account the amount you choose to contribute (ex: \$5 donation each month for twelve months, totaling \$60 for the year).

### Electronic Fund Transfer Authorization

Fill out and return this form with a **voided check** to the address below

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account the **MONTHLY** sum of:

\$25  \$20  \$15  \$10  \$5  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **PER MONTH** and forward that amount to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) (Maximum amount per year is \$5,000). I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the Letter Carrier Political Fund in writing.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ OR Postal Record number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### ATTACH A VOIDED CHECK HERE.

Please send this completed form and your voided check to:

**The Letter Carrier Political Fund**  
100 Indiana Ave NW,  
Washington, DC 20001-2144

Your Postal Record Number (circled):

\*\*\*\*\* AUTO\*\* 5- DIGIT 54321  
**XXXXXXXX89 LC 9876 W 13 08**  
Letter Carrier  
1234 Main Street  
Anywhere, US 54321-9999

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The guideline amounts listed above are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor.

Staple your voided check here

# Pete's Corner

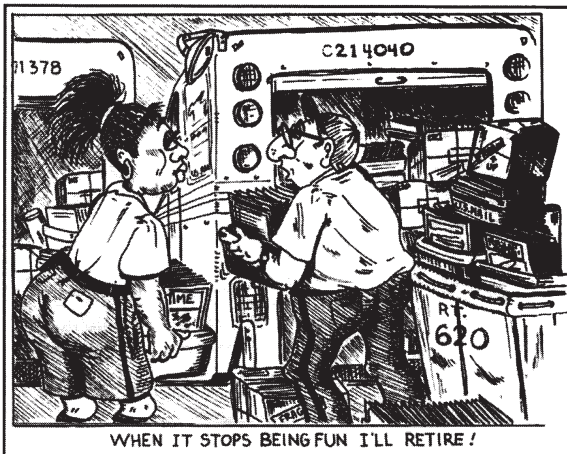
By Peter Marutiak, Editor  
NALC Branch 504

## Thinking of Leaving the Union Upon Retirement? Hold on there, hombre!

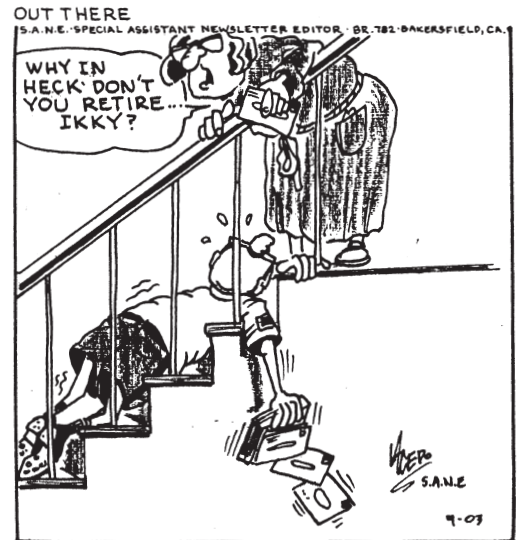
When one retires from the Postal Service, they are immediately kicked over to the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM). That means that all deductions are canceled and must be renewed in writing. Also, those same deductions become monthly (rather than bi-weekly) payments.

One of those deductions that you will have to reconfirm is your membership in the NALC. Many retired City Letter Carriers may feel that it's no longer necessary to remain a Union member. That's understandable as you will never ever need a Shop Steward again [problems with your spouse withstanding]. However, there are some solid financial matters to consider first before deciding to exit all things postal.

### OUT THERE



Originally published 1994



Originally published December 2003

1. Your dues drop from their current level to a mere 75 cents/month. That's \$9.00/year. With 50 years of membership, payment of dues end.
2. You will remain a full member of the NALC. Want to run for an office? Please do. Do you feel like living in Florida? Our retirement city (NALCREST) is yours for the asking [provided you pay your rent]. Do you ever feel like attending the national or state convention(s)? As a member that is up to you. Do you enjoy reading *El Sol* — the Branch 504 newsletter [I certainly hope so] — or the *Postal Record*? As a member, they will keep showing up in your mailbox. Do you want to vote for future contracts between the NALC & the USPS? Sorry, amigo; that's a privilege only active Letter Carriers can enjoy.
3. Do you have the NALC Health Plan? If so, you should stay in the Union. If you drop your membership, you will be charged \$36.00/year to be an Associate Member of the NALC to keep your coverage. If you remain in the NALC, there will be no charge.

4. As a Retiree, you may have the need to contact OPM. Good luck! You can be on the phone forever... As a retired NALC member, you can call our Retirement Department and ask for assistance. Many times, they know the answers to your questions. In the event that you need to speak with someone at OPM they can make that happen more quickly and easily.

In conclusion, staying with the Union isn't all that oppressive financially. So, when that "KMA Day!!!" finally arrives (if you're not sure what this means, ask a Retired Letter Carrier), National will send you an application to rejoin the Union. All you need do is fill it out & get it to the Secretary of your Branch (that would be me at this time). You will have six months to do so. **AFTER THAT, YOU CAN NEVER GET BACK IN THE UNION UNLESS THERE IS AN EXTRAORDINARY REASON.** And, even then, that would be very unusual.

Give it some thought, any of you hope-to-be KMA people...

This "tweaked" article courtesy of the Albuquerque, New Mexico NALC Branch 504 *EL SOL* published in July/August 2017 (Thanx mucho much to my buddy, Pete! A long-time NALC editor, back in the saddle now, and a good friend for many, many years)

# In loving memory of Jen

By Ralph Moeller, 93308 Carrier  
NALC Branch 782

I think that the most valuable thing we have is time. You can't replace it. You can't purchase more — what you have is what you have — and then time is gone. That's it.

My thirty-third year of service started in March and I wonder, "Where did the time go?" Of course, now that I am planning retirement, time seems to have come to a significant slow down.

The person that I respect more than anyone I know is a cousin. I asked for his opinion about my retirement plans. I gave him my numbers and my outlook. I told him I could go right now; but, if I "soldier on", the amount I get will be a bit better.

What he told me is not what I wanted to hear. But, it's what I already knew deep down inside. He said, "Another three years will make a better 20."

This question was asked a year ago. So, one down. Two to go. Unfortunately for me, I am having a really hard time with the remainder of this three-year plan.

In my LLV, I have posted some inspiration. A list of fun things coming up that my wife and I are looking forward to in the next two years. Examples would be where our next golf round will be played, our plans for my next long weekend and the like.

This has worked for me for a while. But, lately, I have felt like just steering the LLV back towards Dole Court, handing supervision the keys and telling them, "I'm done!" This would not be my brightest moment of thought, but it is a thought that *IS* occurring with more frequency.

I need more inspiration.

Life keeps giving me lessons. I found my inspiration last weekend in a very memorable way.

We spent the weekend at my aforementioned cousin's house watching his grandson play in his championship Pony League baseball game. That night I was in bed checking out Facebook and I got the motivation I was needing.

My cousin lost his daughter, Jennifer, to cancer last October. She passed the morning of what was to be game two of the World Series between the Dodgers and the Astros.

Those of you that know me know I am a big baseball fan. More specifically, I am a big Dodger fan! I mention the event because "Jen" (how she was and is affectionately referred to) was also a HUGE Dodger fan. I can't help but think that she would have loved the rest of the Series.

Jen was a teacher of English at Santa Monica High School. However, she was much more than that! Her contributions to education and her students is a list so long I don't even try to display it for anybody. She was loved by every student that ever took her class. She was adored by her fellow faculty and respected by the administration.

To this day, people get on Facebook to tell stories of how she changed their lives or how — even recently — she has even now helped them through her life.

She touched *me* this past weekend.

I happened upon something that she had published in *This I Believe, Inc.* Her story is titled "Street Lamp to Street Lamp" It is an account of how she was trying to get into better physical shape to have a family with her husband.

Unfortunately, she didn't like working out. She found new and innovative ways to avoid the gym because, well, it just isn't fun.

She started walking one day. Then she challenged herself to run to the next street lamp and then to the next one and so on. At the end of summer she was running five miles a day all from that first tiny goal which she set for herself.

People fail at goals because they put unrealistic expectations on themselves. That's what I believe. So, my new motivation is not 24 more months, or 52 more pay periods, or even 104 weeks. Instead, my new motivation and goal for getting through the next two years is *street lamp to street lamp*. "I can deliver to all these addresses to the next street lamp." When I get there, I will deliver all the addresses to the next street lamp.



I share this with you hoping it is a message you will all understand. I hope it will help a few of my fellow Letter Carriers get though whatever it is they need to get through, or at least make that task seem not so overwhelming.

As I continue street lamp to street lamp, written on every one of them in my mind is the name "Jen".

FYI, the second to the last street on my route is Jennifer Street...

No lie.

# POLITICAL WORDS IN THE NEWS — WHAT IS THEIR DEFINITION?



**PUNDIT:** A political analyst, commentator or columnist.

**GOP:** “Grand Old Party”, nickname of the Republican Party.

**DEEP STATE:** In the U.S. this term is used within political science to describe influential decision-making bodies believed to be within the government who are relatively permanent, whose policies and long term plans are unaffected by changing administrations.

**SUBPOENA:** A summons is a writ issued by a government agency, most often by a court to compel testimony by a witness or produce evidence.

**OLIGARCHY:** A small group of wealthy people having control of a country, organization or institution.

**DEMAGOGUE:** A leader whose impassioned rhetoric appeals to greed, fear and hatred, and who often spreads lies.

**FISA WARRANT:** A request by a federal agency for a (FISA) Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Agency. Requested from one of eleven judges on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for a surveillance warrant.

**FASCISM:** A tendency toward an actual exercise of strong autocratic or dictatorial control.

**MONEY LAUNDERING:** The concealment of origins of illegal obtained money, typically by means of transfers involving foreign banks or legitimate businesses.

**GERRYMANDER:** Term originated in 1811 when Governor Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts signed a Bill changing voting districts by the party in power (Democrats) to insure more votes for their candidate.

**TRIBALISM:** The behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one’s own tribe or social group.

**EMOLUMENT CLAUSE:** Article 1 section 9 Clause 8 of the U.S. Constitution prohibits a U.S. president from taking money from any Foreign State, not just gifts, but any payments for services rendered, excluding his annual salary.

**CAPITALISM:** An economic and political system in which a country’s trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit rather than by the State.

**COMMUNISM:** A theory advocating the elimination of private property. A totalitarian system of government in which a single authoritarian party controls state-owned means of production.

**PLUTOCRAT:** A person whose power derives from their wealth.

**IMPERIALISM:** a policy of extending a country’s power through diplomacy of military force.

**SOCIALISM:** A political and economic theory of Social Organization which advocates, that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the Community as a whole.

**BIPARTISAN:** A cooperative effort by two political parties.

**FILIBUSTER:** An attempt by a Senator or group of Senators to obstruct the passage of a Bill — favored by the majority — by talking continuously.

**LAME DUCK:** An officeholder whose term has expired or cannot be continued who thus has lessened power.

**PLUTOCRACY:** Government controlled by, or greatly influenced by the wealthy.

**SNOWFLAKE:** Derogatory term for someone, generally a millennial who allegedly thinks of themselves as unique or special, and is easily offended by opposing opinions.

*Basil, I have one last political term that has been all over the internet, please add it to my article.....  
“POST-MARK”*

**TROLL:** In internet slang, a troll is someone who posts inflammatory extraneous or off-topic messages in an online community (such as a forum, chat room, or blog) with the primary intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disturbing normal on-topic discussion — often for the troll’s amusement.

MARK RAMIREZ

Retired Letter Carrier  
Health Benefit Plan Representative  
The Golden Empire Branch 782





# 2018 NALC HBP Info

## At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
Prescription Drug Program	1-800-933-6252
CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-855-511-1893
<b>"24/7 Nurse Hotline"</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
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
<b>CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount)</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 Bakersfield	(661) 631-9258
Shared Services Option 5 live person	1-877-477-3273

NALC Health Benefit Plan  
20547 Waverly Court  
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

\* Call for approvals Organ Transplants, DME Surgeries  
InPatient

### "Out tHeRe"



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

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

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

**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**

# Congratulations, Gloria Tabieros!!



Capping a thirty-three year career!! Gloria Tabieros (Seniority Date: 5/13/85) joined the "Last Punch Bunch" on May, 25, 2018.

Born and raised in Bakersfield, Gloria graduated from Bakersfield High School and then attended Bakersfield College for a year and a half. After BC, she worked various office jobs here in town.

Prior to joining the Postal Service she was employed at the former California State Unemployment Office located downtown on Q Street.

Gloria served her entire postal career as a 93307 Letter Carrier. In 1985 — when she started out — Brundage Station was located near Madison and E. Brundage Lane. When the station moved to its brand new building, she went along.

While at Brundage, she was the Letter Carrier on Route 706 for her first three years; Route 708 for twenty years; and,

she ended her career on route 712 which she was on since 2009.

I remember sometimes seeing Gloria at her favorite break spot at La Colonia restaurant. She would occasionally be there on break when I was delivering Route 708. She formed a close friendship with the Cornejo family throughout her years of delivering mail to their business.

Now that Gloria is no longer on the workroom floor, co-worker friend Rosa Medina says, "I miss my friend Gloria, I don't have my friend to talk to in the break room before we clock in anymore." (Rosa even called and told Gloria such recently.)

Working safely was always a priority for her and she was honored for her constant attention to detail. Customer Service Manager Janet Galvan presented Gloria with a National Safety Council Million Mile Safety Award in the spring of 2017.

At a ceremony on May 25, 2018 (the day that Gloria retired), Brundage Station manager Janet Galvan concluded her address by honoring Gloria as she said, "Employees that work safely in all of their duties make all of us stronger as whole".



(l-r) Yvonne Esquivel, Gloria Tabieros, Paul Greenfield (author), Jenaya Ward and Maria Gutierrez pause to make a memory!

During the first two weeks of her retirement, Gloria has been babysitting her nine month old great-grandson. She shared, "He's quite a handful! *He wants to grab everything!!*" LOL.

Gloria plans to take her retirement one day at a time.

She still has lunch with former colleagues: retired Carrier Mary Breeding as well as Sarbjeet (Roni) Dhaliwal who transferred to the Stockdale Station last year.

The best thing about retirement is that she will no longer have to worry about whether or not she will be able to participate in special events. Gloria was able to attend the recent wedding of her niece and didn't have to put in for Annual Leave!

Finally, Gloria would like all of her former colleagues to know that she misses all of us a lot!



(l-r) Kim Williams, Gloria Tabieros, Maria Gutierrez and Tony Robles



(l-r) , Maria Gutierrez, Gloria Tabieros, Rosa Medina, Janaya Ward and Tony Robles.

*We want her to know that we will all miss her, too!! All of us look forward to joining her one day in the Last Punch Bunch...*

Sincerely,

PAUL GREENFIELD



Pictures courtesy of Paul Greenfield

*So, Gloria, you are going to miss the people. You won't miss the work... Retirees all say this.*

**Fred Acedo knows it!**

OUT THERE



OUT THERE



"Out there"



"Out there"



OUT THERE



**Gloria Tabieros, you made it!!!**

# A CHALLENGE to All Carriers

By Dave Dikarm  
NALC Branch 3

Before I give you this challenge I have to tell you a little about myself for those of you who don't know me.

I've been carrying mail for twenty-two years. When I first started, I would have been considered a runner. As I've aged, I am not as quick...but I don't get into too much trouble for the time I take. I'm 58 years old and I plan on retiring in two years.

You can imagine the amount of times I've been "walked with" in my career and I've always got whoever walked with me back on time or close to that time. I was never really good at keeping them out too long.

So that gives you some background. Now, here is what happened and how it led to my proposed challenge.

I had just been walked with by a new supervisor in our station. We returned on time. I punched out a few units late. She told me that I worked diligently. Four days later, she was running the floor and all our routes were full. (We only have nine routes in Blasdell). Someone called our station and took our CCA, putting us a route down. We only have one person on the OT list so she gives us all 45 minutes down time. This was one of those down times that really wasn't because the earliest person who punched out that day was 30 minutes over. Some actually took time on their own route *plus* "so called" down time

Anyway, I texted my supervisor to let her know I would be 30 to 45 minutes late. I got a text back that said I was 5 minutes ahead of yesterday and asked, "Do you really need that time?" She ended up sending me three more texts that basically said that I was not doing my job, with the last text sent at 4:00 to tell me I was expected back in the garage by 4:35.

I was so upset with this harassment that my heart was beating out of my chest and I was so stressed out that I felt like I was having a heart attack. I ended up punching out at 4:37 which is 32 minutes. over — **JUST WHAT I ASKED FOR.**

There was no need to give me all this heartache when she'd just told me I was a diligent worker.

I got home that day and talked with my wife about what happened and about retiring sooner. She asked me why I was so upset and told me, "**You know how you worked. If you did your job right and that's what it took you, who cares what she said?**"

I thought about this because she said something that made sense!

Here is where my challenge comes in: I challenge ALL Carriers to work the job right just one day — the way management wants you to work! No cutting corners like almost everyone does. If you don't know what the right way is, ask your Shop Steward.

Let me give you an idea of some of the things I am talking about.

**ANY** time you are delivering a package, secure your vehicle (lock it, curb wheels, etc.?) The minute you turn to walk up that driveway your vehicle is out of sight.

If a parcel is not endorsed "Carrier Leave If No Response", you **DO NOT** leave the parcel unless there is a secure location inside a door or garage. You can't just leave it by the door. You have to leave a notice or try delivering it to a neighbor.

Also, when delivering mounted mail it is not to be in your lap when moving. At **ALL** mounted stops you are supposed to put vehicle in neutral, in case someone rear ends you your vehicle you don't have a "run away" because you get injured.

**ANY** time you walk up stairs you must use hand rail. This means that mail you have in your hand can't be there slowing you up on that delivery.

There are other things that a lot of us do. The part that is funny is all the times I was walked with I was never told to do these kinds of things because doing them can possibly slow you down a lot.

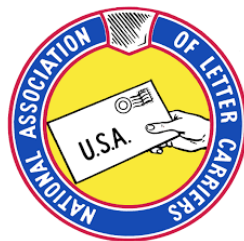
So here's what I did.

**The next day I came in with the attitude that I was going to deliver one day the right way and see what happened.**

Well, that day I got back to the station *and there wasn't one other Carrier car in the lot!* I am very seldom the last one back, and this time everyone was gone...

So, what I learned was that I have been doing an incredible job, getting the job done way faster than I should be.

# A CHALLENGE to All Carriers



Article courtesy of the  
Buffalo, New York  
NALC Branch 3  
BUZZ published  
in May 2018

# After Hours

By Jerry Lonergan  
NALC Branch 2008

It's 10:19 on a Friday night. I've just taken off my glasses and put down the current book I'm reading about the 1964 World Series between the St. Louis Cardinals and NY Yankees.

The Cardinals won in seven games simultaneously ending an era of domination and the beginning of a drought that Yankee fans refer to as the "Horace Clarke Years". It was also the beginning of the end of Mickey Mantle's career.

Right after I turn out the light, my cell phone pings with an incoming text message and even though the kids are grown, I always check to see if everything is okay.

The text is from Branch President Al Friedman asking me about CCA training

on Carrier edit books. He's working on a removal case of a long-time Regular Carrier in Tarpon Springs that is facing losing her job over an audit of her edit book.

*No shock that (a) it's Tarpon and (b) it involves a female.*

I get out of bed and dig out the facilitator training manual to find the information to put together an email to send to Al. We continue to text back and forth and after looking at the clock I realize it's close to midnight.

Al jokes that if his wife comes in the office and asks who he's talking to so late he's going to say, "Jake from State Farm." (For some reason I feel the need to put on khakis.)

*The jokes get worse as it gets later and later...*

I ask Al if management in Tarpon ever gets tired of losing. They're like the New Jersey Generals who play and lose to the Harlem Globetrotters all the time. I may

start calling Al "Meadowlark Lemon." Joking aside, this is just one example of the hard work and dedication of your Officers and Stewards.

These are the people who sit at their kitchen table at night writing grievances that should be done on the clock.

These are the people that miss soccer games and dance recitals to do the work of the union.

Unless you're the Carrier involved, you wouldn't know; but — **one day** — it could be you.

These people sacrifice and make it their business to use their training and experience to protect Letter Carriers.

I have no doubt the union will prevail in this ridiculous case and I'm proud to contribute in a small way to help the people who do the real work.

Article courtesy of the Tarpon Springs, FL  
May 2018 NALC Branch 2008  
*Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update*

## Where's the Mailbox?

— or —

## OOOPS! My Mistake!

By Mark Woodbury, Editor and Author  
NALC Branch 2555  
by way of *Tales of Yore*\*

Active sabotage was rare. More often, if you were a lowly sub, the Regular would simply "forget" to tell you some vital, crucial bit of information about carrying the route — such as where the bad dogs were. Or which lawns not to cross, because of dog logs or customer preference; or where a particularly well-hidden mailbox was.

I can't imagine how anybody could be expected to guess that the coffee can on the porch at 307 E Higham was the place you put the mail? Or that at 605 S Oakland street you were supposed to walk by a perfectly good mailbox on the steps and deliver the mail to an urn on the porch. And, that a certain mailbox on south Wight street is completely hidden, nailed to the backside of a tree.

One day I was subbing on City-2, a route I'd been on only a few

times. I came up to a house on West Gibbs and couldn't find the damned mailbox. I walked completely around the house, getting more and more annoyed, looking for the stupid mailbox.

Finally, aha! I seemed to recall that this house had an enclosed porch and the mailbox was just inside the door. So I opened the door and stepped inside.

Oops! It wasn't an enclosed porch.

And there they all were: the Mom and Dad, and a little boy, and girl, sitting on the couch in their pajamas watching TV — in their living room that I had just barged into. The mailbox? The customer graciously explained that it was in the garage. They'd just taken the mailbox down to repaint it.

Regulars don't necessarily want the sub to look good. It's entertaining to see the sub make a fool out of him or herself. And, if the new guy screws up, it makes the Regular look good by comparison.

They tell the customer, "Yeah, I don't know what it is, but the subs keep getting dumber every year."

Article courtesy of the East Lansing, Michigan NALC Branch 2555  
*Spartan Views* published in the January-February 2017 edition

\* *Tales of Yore* is a book written by Mark Woodbury. It presents numerous humorous accounts of his career and people he knew.

# Bring the union meeting to the members!!!!

**H**OW MANY MEMBERS attend your union meetings? And how do you feel about that? Whether it's just a handful or a hundred, no activist is ever satisfied.

But, you *can* drop a whole load of frustration if you stop expecting a majority of members to travel to the union hall for a two-hour monthly meeting. Thinking about members and meetings in a different way can allow you to bring shorter union meetings to more and more members the workplace.

In most membership organizations (churches, community organizations, sports clubs) about 1 percent of the members are super-interested and super-committed and do most of the volunteering. In a typical Little League, a few people volunteer to be coaches. A few others arrive hours before the game to open the snack bar, mow the grass, and chalk the baselines. Often the same few remain afterward counting the snack bar money and cleaning up.

Sound familiar? In the union, WE are those people.

An organization, or a union, can survive with that 1 percent. But in a mighty organization, 10 percent of the members who are a little more interested have been identified — and have been asked to do something that helps the organization.

## TAKE AN INTEREST

Has a co-worker (let's call him Bob) ever asked you, "What happened at the union meeting yesterday?" Did you feel like saying, "You shoulda been there!"? *But ask yourself, what does Bob's question tell us about him?*

He's more interested than all of the members who have never asked us what happened at the union meeting. Instead of getting mad at Bob for what he doesn't do, we can be glad he's interested and design a small request that he is ready for.

You can make a deal with Bob: if you find him every month and give him a short report from the union meeting, he will agree to pass along the most important points to the co-workers he has lunch with.

To bring the union meeting to even more workers, you'll need to identify and recruit more volunteers like Bob. When you do that, you will have a communication structure: a member-to-member network.

The most valuable potential volunteers are those who are (already) trusted by their co-workers. They don't necessarily stand out, so they can go unnoticed by busy activists and union leaders. But these "Most Trusteds" usually have similar qualities: They are good workers. They prevent problems for themselves. They listen more than talk, they respect others, and they refrain from gos-

sip, complaining, joining cliques, trashing co-workers, and other drama.

How do you find the Most Trusteds? Just ask around. Have conversations with groups of workers that work together or go to lunch or break together. Let them know that you are trying to set up a communication network and you want to approach someone that co-workers trust the most. They don't have to be the most union-involved, just the most trustworthy.

Whether or not the Most Trusteds have shown much interest in the union up to now, they can be asked to do a small job such as Bob is doing with his co-workers.

When recruiting folks for this job, it's important that you communicate not only what you're asking them to do and why but also the qualities they have that make them perfect for it. These folks know that the role they're already performing is important to their co-workers. You can go a long way by communicating that you notice and value them.

The idea is to recruit the most trusted co-workers and get them talking about the union as part of what they're already doing with the people who trust them.

## ABCs OF ORGANIZING

For such a communication structure to work, there needs to be good teamwork between the activists (that's you) and the trusted workplace leaders. Both are essential.

Activists will tolerate and even enjoy meetings about strategy and next steps to educate and organize their member. They can prepare materials that make it easier for the workplace leaders to do their part, such as a one-minute, three-point script that summarizes the union meeting, or members' right to union representation before filling out accident report.

OUT THERE



Originally published July 2007

In every workplace, workers show a range of knowledge about and interest in the union, from A to Z, with the As knowing the least and the Zs being the most knowledgeable and committed. Most *Labor Notes* subscribers are closer Z. Most of our members are closer to A. Our job as activists is to help move more members from As to Bs, or from Cs to Ds — and as far up the alphabet as each one of them is willing to go.

That's where we can get help from Bob and others like him. Let's say that Bob was a D on our scale. But since he was asked to become more involved and to share the highlights of the union meeting with the co-workers he eats lunch with, the As in his lunch group have become Bs and the Bs have become Cs. And Bob has moved also, from a D to an E.

Now, everyone in Bob's small circle is moving, slowly but steadily, toward more knowledge and more connection to the union without even coming to membership meetings! These workers are all, in effect, having a monthly union meeting: two hours for you at the hall, five minutes at the workplace for Bob, and a minute or two for his co-workers at lunch.

Workplace leaders like Bob know "their people" and what union role an individual might say yes to. Who is the friendliest person in the group? Who is always the first to meet a new worker? Maybe they can be recruited as a union greeter to answer questions new workers have, and introduce them to co-workers and the Steward. Who loves to barbecue? Maybe they could be asked to cook at the union picnic.

As workplace leaders get comfortable with their role (with your continued encouragement), they are best situated to help their co-workers increase their connection to the best values and highest ideals of the union and to step their way up the alphabet.

So let go of your frustration about low attendance at the union meetings, and focus on your five-minute meetings with members like Bob.

*The author, Joe Fahey, is a retired Teamsters local president and international representative.*

Article courtesy of the Portland, Oregon NALC Branch 82 B Mike published in November 2017 — by way of October 2017 *Labor Notes*

## Nothing Bad is Ever Gonna Happen To Us?

By Mike Shawn, Editor  
NALC Branch 3825

In the most recent issue of the *Postal Record*, NALC President Rolando addressed the challenges facing us as Letter Carriers in regard to the political process. Last year, despite the spectre of many damaging legislative proposals to both our active and retired Letter Carriers, the worst of those proposals did not go through.

However, the balance of the Supreme Court has shifted to the extreme right, and the Trump administration is attempting to pack the courts with anti-worker judges. While the courts have never been a bastion of pro-labor support, over time this could have a huge negative impact on workers.

*Many of our members tend to believe that none of the bad things we have been warned about will come to pass.* I suppose some of that is due to past successes that the NALC has had in the legislative process. For those that have not been alert though, proposals have been made in the past Congress that could have damaged our retirement plans dramatically (both CSRS and FERS) and our right to collective bargaining. Some of you may remember

the new executive branch briefly subjected the USPS to a hiring freeze, but relented almost immediately.

We are fortunate to have excellent representation in the legislative forum due to the efforts of the NALC. We must continue to support the efforts of the NALC in this arena.

### HOW TO DO THIS?

First, I would recommend downloading the NALC Member App to your phone — it's a great way to stay informed of current issues facing our members and the Postal Service.

Next, *come to your monthly union meetings!!* In addition to discussing many local strategies and issues, we address national issues and their implications on our wages, benefits and quality of life. Over the years, we have had candidates for the House of Representatives [and even National Union officers (including our current National President Fred Rolando and former NALC President Vince Sombrotto), as well as local activists and labor organizers] as guests at our meetings.

I would be remiss if I failed to note you can contribute to the NALC's PAC — the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF).

But the question is: **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?** It means we have bipartisan agreement on issues that are imperative for

maintaining our jobs. If we were to lose 6 day delivery, we would be looking at losing one sixth of our jobs. That should be a huge issue for each and every one of us.

Maintaining services standards and door delivery are issues that continue to give us a competitive edge with UPS, Fed Ex and the new delivery services like Amazon. We can't afford to be complacent about these issues.

The upcoming session of Congress may well deal with these issues as well as Postal Reform. While they are notorious for punting many of the big issues down the road, it would be irresponsible to believe that will continue to happen.

I think that our National President Fred Rolando put it well in the most recent issue of the *Postal Record* when he wrote:

*"There is no substitute for grass-roots organizing focused on electing pro-USPS and pro-Letter Carrier friends to Congress, regardless of political party. As we learned in 2016, elections have consequences. We have our work cut out for us in the months ahead when it comes to getting out the vote."*

Again, I urge you to get informed and stay involved. The job you save may be your own.

Article courtesy of the Rockville, MD NALC Branch 3825 UNITY published in Spring 2018

## Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win...

# CYA: An Acronym to Work By...

## Reporting Mechanical Defects for Postal Vehicles

By Ryan Stockton, Second Vice President  
NALC Branch 133

Let's not forget that our LLV's are older than many of our CCA's.

If you are checking your postal vehicle every day like you should, there will come a time when you find your vehicle is in need of some sort of repair. There are many situations Letter Carriers may find themselves in.

For example: What do you do if you find your parking brake malfunctioning or that your blinkers don't work?

The answer can be found in Handbook M-41 City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities Handbook M-41.

Section 842.1 states: *Driver must (a) report all mechanical defects or failures and major body damage on Form 4565, Vehicle Repair Tag (see exhibit 842.1) as soon as noted, and (b) immediately turn in the completed form to a dispatcher or manager. Minor body damage can sometimes await repair until the next regular inspection and need not be reported more than once.*

If you are reporting something such as minor body damage that does not interfere with the operation of the vehicle, the repairs do not necessarily have to be done prior to the vehicle being used again. If you find that the blinkers do not work or the brakes are not functioning properly, fill out PS Form 4565 in accordance with Handbook M-41 which states:

### Section 842.2 Preparation of Form 4565:

Whenever a motor vehicle requires repairs, complete Form 4565 in triplicate as follows:

- a. Enter vehicle number and the hour and date vehicle was checked in.
- b. Put check mark opposite item requiring repair, or, if not listed, enter opposite Other Repairs.

c. Describe details of repair under Remarks. For example, if brake block is checked, state: pulls to the right, brakes fading, etc.

After filling out PS Form 4565, make sure to get a copy for your own records. If your supervisor says something like, "You don't need a copy" as they are known to do, politely inform them that Handbook M-41 Section 842.3 states in part:

### Disposition of Form 4565:

*Deliver to the garage dispatcher or manager for initialing. Driver copy will be returned to you and should be kept as proof that damage was reported.*

While getting your own copy of the PS Form 4565 may not seem important, it really is. If you find body damage, it should be reported. If you have a copy of your PS Form 4565 reporting the body damage, it can keep you from being held responsible for damage to a postal vehicle that you did not cause.

It is no secret that the Postal Service has been short of vehicles for a few years now. This shortage in vehicles has caused some members of management to place pressure on Carriers to still use vehicles after mechanical defects have been reported. If management instructs you to use a particular vehicle after you have reported mechanical defects, ask to see your Shop Steward.

If you reasonably believe that driving that vehicle would put you in imminent danger to life or limb, tell your supervisor respectfully you are not going to follow their instructions, as they are placing you in harm's way.

Article courtesy of the North Highlands, California NALC Branch 133  
Swing room Gazette published in December 2017

## Accountable Items

You are responsible for all accountable items that you sign for each morning. When you return in the evening you must return your keys, postage dues, registers, or any other piece you signed for.

**DO NOT** just put your things down at the accountable desk and walk away! If any of these items are somehow lost (and you did not get cleared by a clerk) you could face some serious trouble. If you must wait there, *and you are getting paid to do that*, then just wait for someone to clear you of all items.

You have the right to ask for a 3821 (clearance receipt) which lists all items returned, and the signature of the person checking you in. Get it round dated. This will clear you of any responsibilities afterwards. They do not have the right to refuse to give you a 3821. If they do ask for your steward. Always cover your butts. You can never be too careful...

This article courtesy of the November 2017 330 Digest published by South Bend, Indiana NALC Branch 330



# Pay Attention! It's YOUR \$\$\$\$ so protect 'em!

By Scott Dulas, President  
NALC Branch 114

There have been cases of time clock fraud and wage theft by supervisors in the district and across the nation. I would like to think it wouldn't happen here. I'm sure that the people in the affected areas thought it wouldn't happen in their areas either.

I would suggest that all Carriers log their hours and verify them with their with paychecks.

In May of this year, postal management issued a Memorandum telling their supervisors not use 733 time for parcels, because it does not credit parcel time to routes. They asked management to provide more accurate information by clocking parcel delivery times to the respective routes. The postmaster has said that local management is too busy to figure out what times get credited to which routes. PLEASE clock to 721 and clock the time into whichever route is getting assistance. **This is important!**

When we clock to 733 time, it hides that time. The time that isn't correctly added to a route makes that route look that much shorter. You may, one day, want to bid to the route that hasn't had the time correctly credited to it. The route may get more time added to it in the next route adjustment because somebody wasn't doing the correct and proper clock rings. Management should — under no circumstances punch you to 733 time! Please notify a Steward immediately if you know of management committing time clock fraud.

Every morning you work, you must give an opinion of your estimated leave time and estimated return time. Management DOES NOT get to tell you what time you will be done.

If you tell them that you will be by unable to complete the route in eight hours, then you should receive a PS Form 3996. If they don't provide a PS Form 3996, let a Steward know. Please also do the back rings on the clock. If you call in at 2 p.m. to tell management that you will not be done on time, they do not get to enter you in for unauthorized overtime. If management tells you to continue delivering, they are authorizing your overtime.

Article courtesy of the Duluth, Minnesota NALC Branch 114  
*Zenith Branch News* published in December 2017

## "OuT tHeRe"



## Introducing ECOMP

By Tom Cleer, President  
NALC Branch 3520

The Postal Service has notified the NALC that it will begin testing a web-based program on September 25, 2017 that allows employees to file OWCP forms electronically in the Northern Virginia, Greensboro, and Dallas Districts. The Northern Virginia District also sent out a flyer as follows:

**Effective immediately, the US Postal Service is using the Employee's Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP) to electronically file workers compensation forms.**

**ECOMP is a web-based application accessible via the Department of Labor's public Internet site. Through this portal, federal workers and their employers may:**

**Electronically file worker' compensation forms;**

**Track the exact status of any form or document submitted via ECOMP and**

**Electronically upload and submit documents to existing DFEC case files.**

**For more information, please contact Injury Compensation or visit <https://www.ecompedoLgov>.**

Article courtesy of the Northern Virginia  
NALC Branch 3520 *NOVA CARRIER*  
published in October 2017

# VETERANS' CORNER

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces comprise almost a quarter of the membership of the National Association of Letter Carriers – active NALC members as well as retired members.

These veterans traded their military uniforms for Letter Carrier uniforms, and they continue to serve their communities and this great nation!

Here is Veterans' info that may very well be important.

## WOUNDED WARRIORS LEAVE

By Mark S. Leon, EEO Advocate  
NALC Branch 3

On November 5, 2015, President Obama signed the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015 (Pub. L114-75) (Act). The Act requires federal agencies to make leave immediately available to eligible disabled service members to attend medical appointments without loss or reduction to pay.

Over the past few months I've been receiving many inquiries regarding the 'Wounded Warrior Leave Act' and how it might apply to our postal employees who are veterans. In an effort to explain the program and the qualifications, let me reiterate the importance of claiming your Veterans preference and keeping your records up to date (i.e. PS Form 50).

By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over non-veterans in hiring from competitive lists of eligible (or basically qualified) job candidates.

Veterans' preference recognizes the economic loss suffered by citizens who have served their country in uniform in times of strife, restores veterans to a favorable competitive position for government employment, and acknowledges the larger obligation owed to disabled veterans. Preference applies in hiring for most federal civil service jobs, including when agencies make temporary appointments.

In recognition of the sacrifices made by those serving in the Armed Forces, Congress enacted laws to prevent veterans seeking Federal employment from being penalized because of time spent in military service. By law, veterans who are disabled or who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified periods or in military campaigns are generally entitled to preference over non-veterans both in Federal hiring practices and in retention during reductions in force (RIF).

In addition to your preference(s) it has also been established that any federal employee who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30% or more, during the 12-month period beginning on the first day of employment, to up to 104 hours of leave, without loss or reduction in pay, for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disability for which sick leave could regularly be used (requires the forfeiture of any such leave that is not used during such 12-month period).

The Postal Service supports the employment of veterans who have chosen to commence or resume a civilian career with the Postal Service following their military service. Consistent with the requirements of the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave

Act of 2015, the Postal Service allows any employee who meets the eligibility requirements to take a specifically designated type of leave, without loss or reduction in pay, for undergoing medical treatment for a service related disability.

The Postal Service has also decided that this benefit will also be extended to current employees. Accordingly, all employees who were on the rolls as of November 4 and who otherwise meet the Act's eligibility requirements were allowed to use up to 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave during the 12 month period beginning November 5, 2016. Any of these employees who used leave for a condition covered by the Act prior to this notice could request to have the subject leave converted to Wounded Warriors Leave.

In short, if you are a disabled veteran who is employed with the United States Postal Service and have on record (PS Form 50), a 30% disability (or greater) rating you are entitled 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave.

### How do I request to use Wounded Warriors Leave?

Requests for WWL should be made in advance, unless the leave is unforeseeable. Prior to the absence, employees must complete PS Form 3971, designating the reason for the absence as "other" and writing "Wounded Warriors Leave" in the space provided. Within 15 calendar days from their return to work, employees must provide to their supervisor a completed PS Form 5980, Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave, signed by their medical provider. The use of WWL can be used in combination with other employee accrued leave and may also be used in conjunction with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provided the employee meets eligibility requirements.

For additional information on the Wounded Warriors Leave program, please see MI EL-510-2016-8, Wounded Warriors Leave, and PS Form 5980, Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave, on PolicyNet at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/>.

*Sources: Office of  
Personnel Management (OPM)  
& USPS Human Resources (liteblue)*

Thank you again from all of our members for your great personal sacrifice, vigilance and commitment to ensuring the security of our homeland and the preservation and promotion of freedom and justice for all people.

**For further information or requests feel free to contact Branch 3, Western NY, 716-631-3940; Mark Leon, Niagara Square 716-842-4752, (cell) 716-208-5715, or e-mail to: MrR2Leon@aol.com**

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

# Military disability benefits and OWCP

Courtesy of the NALC Branch 3126 Veterans Group

**M**ilitary veterans are, and have been, important and valued members of the Letter Carrier craft. Many veterans come to carry mail with service-connected disabilities and have long, injury-free careers. For others, previous service-connected disabilities can be aggravated by the wear and tear of carrying the mail. Veterans should understand their rights under federal law to compensation for on-the-job injuries.

Military veteran Letter Carriers are eligible for protection under both the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) and the Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP). Letter Carriers with DVA disability ratings are eligible for coverage under FECA if their job duties aggravate their pre-existing service-related disability.

While such injuries are protected under FECA, veterans need to be mindful of both the benefits and the limitations the dual coverages of DVA disability and FECA impose.

Under FECA, an injured Letter Carrier whose claim is accepted is entitled to medical benefits and wage-loss compensation. For Letter Carriers with DVA disability ratings, applying for some FECA benefits may require an election between the DVA benefits and FECA benefits.

If the injury as a Letter Carrier is for the same body part as a service-related disability, an accepted claim under FECA can provide benefits for injury above and beyond the original DVA disability rating. An injury unrelated to a DVA disability rating is eligible for full coverage under FECA.

FECA regulations address the apportionment of injury and require claims examiners to communicate with the DVA prior to the award of wage-loss compensation to prevent the dual payment of benefits. This is not always done properly, resulting in overpayments of FECA benefits.

Injured Letter Carriers with DVA disability ratings need to be alert to the danger of an overpayment. OWCP asks injured workers if they have ever applied for disability benefits from the DVA on forms CA-7 and EN 1032. Even if OWCP is duly notified of the DVA benefits, they may not adjust compensation, resulting in an overpayment. This can result in substantial charges for overpayment by OWCP, causing financial hardship on injured workers.

Injured Letter Carriers can avoid these charges by not claiming wage-loss compensation from OWCP until their proper level of compensation has been accurately determined. This may take longer than expected, as OWCP will need to determine the proper increase in disability for the service-related disability. At the same time, DVA disability ratings may be increased due to the on-the-job injury. Such increases will affect the eligibility of wage-loss compensation under FECA.

Even if you have a DVA disability rating for an injury, there are good reasons to file a claim under FECA. As most veterans with service-connected disabilities continue to get their health care from the VA, they may want to continue to use their DVA physician. Injured workers with DVA disability ratings are not prohibited from seeing a non-DVA physician for their on-the-job injury. Under FECA, a compensably injured Letter Carrier has the option of choosing his or her attending physician and can be referred to specialists for his or her particular injury.

DVA physicians are sometimes reluctant to process the necessary medical narratives for veterans, claiming on-the-job injuries. One of the benefits for having an accepted claim is the Postal Service's obligation to make every effort to find work for compensably injured workers.

It's important for an injured Letter Carrier to inform his or her DVA physician that, by having an accepted OWCP claim, the Postal Service has an obligation to find work for him or her within his or her limitations. Physicians want their patients to heal and return to work when possible. Informing your physician of Postal Service obligations may help you secure the medical narrative you need.

While the regulations for coverage under both FECA and DVA disability have complex rules, any Letter Carrier with a service-connected disability who suffers an injury in the course of performing his or her duties should apply for protection under FECA.

If you have any questions about such claims, call your NALC National Business Agent's office for help.

This article is courtesy of the Madison Heights, Michigan NALC Branch 3126 *NEW VISION* published in February 2018

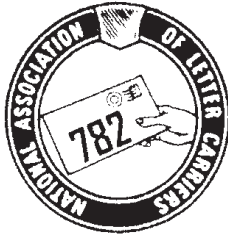
*Thank You to Branch President and Editor Paul Roznowski!!!*

## FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members who are military veterans access to the information and tools specific to veterans' rights and benefits within the U.S. Postal Service. It seeks to provide all NALC members who are also military veterans, active full-time and part-time Letter Carriers — as well as retired Letter Carriers — resources, rights information and a sense of camaraderie.

The Veterans Group will provide the ability to connect with fellow NALC members and stay informed on issues of importance to Letter Carrier veterans. Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for your military service and membership in the NALC.





# from the editor-guy

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

You may have questions about how this book can be used or whether or not it will be a good investment. You can call me at the phone

number listed below. You can write to me, or you can e-mail me at BRZIII@AOLCOM. I would be glad to answer your questions or give you an idea of how this product can be a creative tool for your current or future NALC editor in presenting information to NALC members. *(Please follow this trail \*\*\* )*

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

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

BASIL ZUNIGA

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

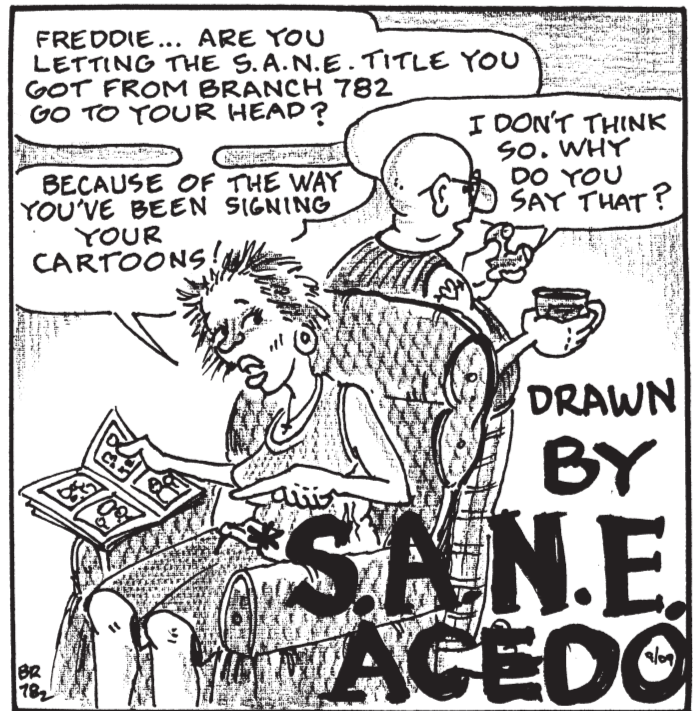
Base cost is **\$30** but you can donate more. (Cost covers wear & tear, paper, toner, etc.)

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

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

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

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



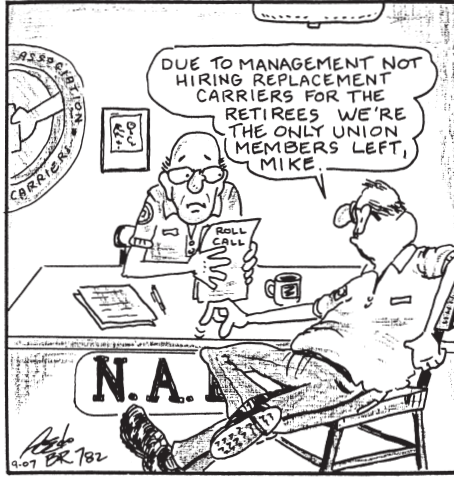
This is a sample. You are looking at page 74 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016 ...

OUT THERE



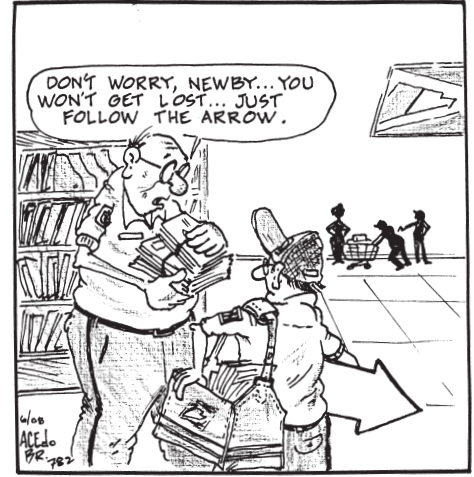
Originally published April 2009

OUT THERE



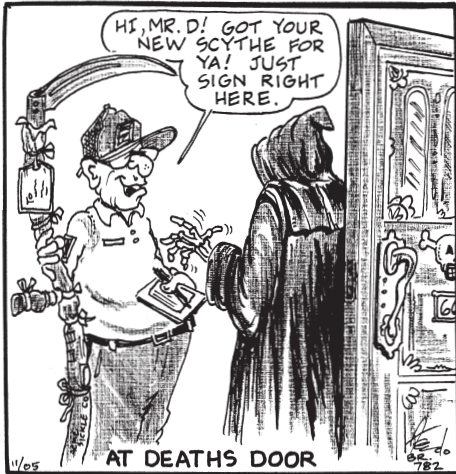
Originally published April 2009

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Originally published May 2009

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# from the editor-guy

Let's say your boss worked for 25 years and made \$75,000 per year, that monthly retirement initial calculation would be around \$1,560 per month according to the formula.

So, as a hypothetical, check out some made up numbers for a Letter Carrier:  
**2013-2014:**\$57,000; **2014-2015:** \$58,000; **2015-2016:** \$59,000; **2016-2017:** \$60,000; **2017-2018:** \$61,000  
 [Retired January 1, 2019]

## High-3 Average Salary

$$(\$59,000 + \$60,000 + \$61,000) / 3 = \$60,000$$

## High-5 Average Salary

$$(\$57,000 + \$58,000 + \$59,000 + \$60,000 + \$61,000) / 5 = \$59,000$$

Then, use the formula.

[Frankly, the High-5 change hurts other federal employees a lot more than it hurts us. It's not unheard of for federal employees to take a significantly higher paying job for a few years prior to retirement to increase their retirement. Generally, a Letter Carrier will be at top step for many years except for COLAs and general wage increases.]

The budget proposal submitted on May 4, 2018 identified the savings to the government if a change from the High-3 to a High-5 takes effect. Here is a graphic in an enclosure to the cover letter.

**Budget Implications:**  
**Averaging employee's basic pay in High-5 and not High-3**

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
 FY 2018 Legislative Proposals Impacting Retirement Programs  
 Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF)  
 (\$ Millions)

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	10 Years
(\$277)	(\$339)	(\$405)	(\$476)	(\$549)	(\$623)	(\$698)	(\$778)	(\$860)	(\$944)	(\$5,949)

If you look at the impact in the year 2019, please note that the impact is **\$277,000,000.**

*Oh, those "savings" come out of your pocket every year for the rest of your life...*

I have to assume that the issue the two people had with my oral report at the General Meeting might have been that I didn't go into the importance of the other two "stool legs" of FERS — Social Security and the TSP. And, they DO make a difference. Okay, here goes.

Employees covered under FERS pay into the Social Security fund at the same rate as private employees. Please bear in mind that any projected retirement plans for FERS employees are linked to Social Security. It is important for you to realize something. Any changes that Congress might make to current and future SSA recipients' compensation and benefits (for the good of the country) might very well be to your own personal detriment.

Obviously, the importance of maxing out as much as possible into the Thrift Savings Plan can't be stressed enough. (**BUT** they also have plans for the TSP. Hmmm... I suggest that you should look into possible impacts to your retirement plans if those changes also take effect.) The TSP is absolutely essential to how comfortable your retirement might be!

Anyway, let me once again apologize. **I WAS WRONG!**

The major hit is **NOT** the possible change to you if your retirement is calculated at a High 5 instead of at a High 3 ("savings" = \$277,000 in 2019).

No. COLA "savings" in 2019 would be **\$1,119,000,000.** COLA? What's COLA?

Whether you realize it or not, a major factor in the wages you are paid is the inclusion of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs). If there were no COLAs, *you would be paid significantly less as a Letter Carrier* and **THAT** is considered *their* big "savings". Really.

The Trump Administration and many in Congress know that "savings" would be possible if COLAs were done away with (And, here is the quoted language from the OPM proposal: "...eliminate COLAs under the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) for **CURRENT** [emphasis added] and future retirees..." bottom of page 5 in this newsletter.) For added illumination, take a look at another graphic attached to the May 4, 2018 letter.

**Budget Implications:**  
**Reduce and eliminate COLAs under FERS**

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
 FY 2018 Legislative Proposals Impacting Retirement Programs  
 Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF)  
 (\$ Millions)

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	10 Years
(\$1,119)	(\$1,783)	(\$2,524)	(\$3,350)	(\$4,247)	(\$5,213)	(\$6,250)	(\$7,357)	(\$8,539)	(\$9,798)	(\$50,180)

So... more than four times the "savings" are realized from doing away with the COLA out of *your* pocket...

"The devil is in the details." There are a few more gems in the 20 page letter which was sent to Congress .

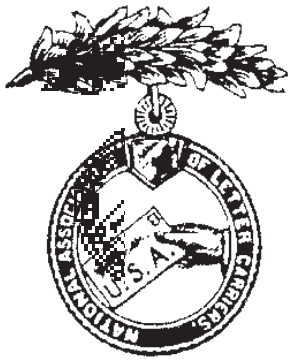
You can do what you want, but I suggest that you take a look for yourself at <https://www.afge.org/globalassets/documents/generalreports/2018/opm-legislative-proposal-csrs-and-fers-updates.pdf>. (Hint: Ending FERS Annuity Supplement would...)

And, again, I was wrong. I implied that going to High-5 would be *the* issue. Sorry.

Ron Watson, NALC Director of Retirees, thank you so much for setting me straight!!! Christopher Henwood (Regional Workers Compensation Assistant, NALC), I really appreciate ALL of the assistance you gave to me by reviewing my comments for accuracy and legitimacy! Any of the residual unintended mistakes

are, "Mea Culpa" — all mine. (I do know that if they're there, somebody'll find 'em...)

BASIL ZUNIGA



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### FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

## from the editor-guy

I was wrong! And — for those who may not have actually read that last sentence correctly — let me repeat it with some degree of emphasis:

### I WAS WRONG!!!

At the May General Meeting, I made a statement. I was then called wrong by two members in attendance. And, I *WAS* wrong!!!

In my monthly editor report to our members, I erroneously stated that the Administration's budget proposal was an attempt to change the current calculation of retirement from the "High 3" to a "High 5" method *and* that **IT** would be **THE** major hit to our members' futures.

### I WAS WRONG!!!

Let me point out one basic fact: the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) and its predecessor, the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), not the USPS.

*Oh...this presentation is for FERS employees.*

Currently, retirement benefits are *first* determined by adding together the highest three consecutive years of basic pay earnings [not overtime, bonuses or extra payments] and then dividing that number by 3. (Just for info, sections 8331(4) and 8401(3) of title 5, United States Code establish that this is to be done.)

The *current* formula for the basic benefit plan is: High-3 Salary x Years of Service x Pension Multiplier = Annual Pension Benefit. The standard Pension Multiplier is 1%; however, employees who are 62 or older with at least 20 years of service will receive a multiplier of 1.1%. Then, that number is divided by 12 to determine the monthly amount minus any elective deductions.

*Continued on page 26...*

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