

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



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TAFT

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JULY 2011

What is going on?

by Chris Johnson
Southwest Florida NALC Branch

You are probably wondering, what in the hell is going on and what is our future.

Because end of fiscal year debt limit issues were coming up for the Postal Service and nothing was happening, something had to give. The Postmaster General decided that we were not going to prefund future FERS retirement contributions. We have already future deposits of \$6.9 billion in this account and we need this money for present day running operations of the Postal Service.

This move probably was done last year when we were close to debt limits. Announcing this puts more pressure on Congress to act on the future of the Postal Service now. In no way does this affect payments into our individual retirement accounts.

So what happens now?

We have Bills lingering in Congress that would have alleviated our debt limit problems — H.R. 1351 and H. R. 137. We have over 160 co-sponsors for each of these issues and have written about these for awhile. But, now watch out. Republican chairmen of the subcommittees that deal with Postal issues in Congress, have proposed sweeping changes to the way we do business.

First, Representative Ross of Florida, has declared that we have not overpaid any CSRS and FERS accounts and that any help for the Postal Service would be a “bailout”. And of course he and all Republicans are against all bail outs. The \$75 billion CSRS and \$6.9 billion FERS were just the cost of doing business.

His colleague Congressman Darrell Issa of California (the richest member of Congress) has proposed a bill that would gut the Postal Service. And, in the battle to raise our countries debt limit, our issues could be trade offs for last minute deals.

So what is in Issa’s bill? Generally, drastically reduce costs and benefits. Give the Postal Service the ability to cut Saturday and other low day delivery. No lessening of future CSRS and FERS future liabilities. Raising Postal Debt limit by \$10 billion. Bring in a new independent Commission with no oversight to close post offices and end operations. Double the amount employees pay for health benefits. End collective bargaining. Base our pay to comparable (according to this appointed committee) private sector work. Stop employer contributions to employee retirement funds. Sell advertising on Postal Service vehicles and in lobbies. Raise prices when costs get higher, that would push customers away.

Is this enough? No, they want it all.

Is this what you want for your future? Your union leaders are fighting the good fight. Can we count on your support? Remember COLCPE. Take your country back!

Johnny on the Spot



What ISSA the problem?

Congressman Darryl Issa (R-CA) has requested that the provision preserving six-day delivery be stripped from the Financial Service Appropriations bill. Removing this language would destroy what has been a bipartisan, 30-year history and tradition of Congress maintaining six-day delivery.

Congressman Issa also has recently introduced the Postal Reform Act of 2011—which is one of the boldest and craftiest attacks ever on the Postal Service.

In a nutshell, Issa's plan is to not let the Postal Service fix itself.

Issa's plan is to set up two new agencies—one to smash the Postal Service into a wall and one to sell off the pieces. It has a plan to loan the USPS money and a plan to slap our hands for taking it. It has a plan to force us into bankruptcy and a plan to "renegotiate" salaries and collective bargaining agreements *afterward...*

Rep. Darrell Issa did have a few things right in a recent article on the U.S. Postal Service: Congress should act now, it bears "a considerable share of the blame" for the Postal Service's challenges, and the USPS is too important to fail.

Beyond that, let's just say that the amount of misinformation he's been circulating about the USPS is striking, given that few institutions touch more Americans than we do in delivering mail to 150 million homes and businesses each and every day *SIX DAYS A WEEK*.

We Letter Carriers get to know our communities and customers. Occasionally, we save those elderly residents who are ill. We find lost children, put out fires and do much more. We also conduct the nation's largest single-day food drive, replenishing food pantries everywhere.

I'd like to present some facts for you to consider the next time you hear that it's us, the workforce, which is breaking the USPS or hear that the USPS has generated multibillion-dollar losses or that the USPS needs a potential taxpayer bailout.

For starters, the Postal Service doesn't use a dime of taxpayer money and hasn't for more than a quarter-century! Our revenue comes from the sale of postal products and services *AND* we deliver to residents and businesses at the best rates in the world!

The USPS has actually run a net operational profit delivering the mail over the past four years: revenues exceeded costs by \$837 million. Even with the worst recession in 80 years, and even with internet diversion, the USPS has taken in more money from postal operations than it has spent. Last quarter's net operating profit alone was \$226 million.

The \$20 billion in losses cited over the past four years has little to do with declining mail volume or the Internet or its workforce. Rather, it stems from the 2006 Congressional mandate that the USPS prefund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years, and do so *within a decade*—***SOMETHING NO OTHER PUBLIC AGENCY OR PRIVATE FIRM DOES.*** These roughly \$5.5 billion annual payments since 2007—\$21 billion in total—are the difference between a positive and negative ledger. **Relieve the Postal Service of this unreasonable obligation and it would have been profitable!**

What postal unions, USPS management, the Postal Regulatory Commission, key Republican and Democratic legislators on postal issues and others are asking of Congress is simply this: **ALLOW THE POSTAL SERVICE TO STOP DEPLETING ITS OPERATING FUNDS TO MAKE THESE PAYMENTS, AND INSTEAD PERMIT AN INTERNAL TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM ITS PENSION SURPLUSES—AS ANY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS WOULD DO.** This is earned USPS revenue, *with zero taxpayer involvement.* The transfer would leave pensions and retiree health benefits fully funded well into the future, while putting the USPS operational budget back on sound financial footing on paper—*as it's been all along in practice.*

Several Bills promoted in the Senate and the House by legislators from both parties—though not the approach proposed by Congressman Issa—would accomplish this.

Come to our general membership meeting, write or call your Congressman to support HR-1351. Get involved and donate to COLCPE. ***It IS all of our livelihoods at stake.***

Respectfully,

JOHN ORTEGA
Branch 782 Vice President

5 - DAY
Is still the
WRONG WAY

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS N.A.L.C.

Affiliated with AFL-CIO

July 15, 2011

Dear Mike Towery, NALC Branch 782 President:

As we are all aware of, Congressman Issa has now done what he was intending to do all along—introduce legislation to gut the Postal Service and significantly reduce all the wages and benefits our union has fought hard to obtain for the past 100 plus years.

As NALC President Rolando's recent E-Activist has alluded to, we the rank and file NALC members, **MUST** fight back to do all that we can to keep HR-2309 from getting passed into Law. We need to urge our Congressional representatives to co-sponsor HR-1351 (The Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011). The only way that we can stop the downward slide of USPS finances is to enact HR-1351. This legislation would help ensure the USPS be treated in a fair and equitable manner allowing it to overcome the very difficult financial challenges it currently faces by addressing the decades-old accounting error that led the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to overcharge the USPS by billions of dollars for payments into the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). HR-1351 will directly address the central cause of the financial crisis facing the Postal Service.

The Rules Committee meeting scheduled for last week has been postponed till sometime this week. At this meeting Congressman Darrell Issa is expected to bring forth an amendment to strip the 6-day delivery language out of HR-2434 (Financial Services Appropriations Bill).

Congressman David Dreier is Chair of the Rules Committee and, if Congressman Issa brings his amendment up for consideration, there is a good chance it will pass and then move on to a vote by the full House of Representatives possibly by the end of this week.

Taking this into account, please immediately have your Branch membership contact every single Congressional Representative and have them do the following actions: First, look up your member of Congress' Washington office phone number by going to this website: "<https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>"; Second, call his or her office immediately; Third, ask your representative to urge the Rules Committee to preserve the language contained in H.R. 2434 that protects six-day delivery.

PLEASE let your Member of Congress know that ending six-day service would: Cause the loss of 80,000 full- and part-time jobs; break a bipartisan, 30-year history and tradition of Congress preserving six-day delivery; hurt tens of millions of customers and businesses whose livelihoods depend on Saturday mail delivery, including those who send and receive prescription drugs, parcels and rented movies and those who conduct financial transactions via the mail; ignore a Postal Regulatory Commission finding that eliminating Saturday delivery would result in lower savings than USPS forecasts; that 25 percent of First Class and Priority mail could be delayed by two or more days, and that such a reduction in service would have a disproportionately negative impact on elderly and rural Americans.

If you have already made your call, please call again. Please update the staff person you speak with, inform them that the hearing has been temporarily postponed, then deliver the same message as before.

Thank you for your assistance with this crucial legislative alert. **TELL EACH OF YOUR BRANCH 782 MEMBERS THAT WE NEED TO BAND TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL. EACH OF US NEEDS TO DO OUR PART!**

In unionism,

JOHN BEAUMONT

President, California State Association of Letter Carriers

Minutes of the June 2011 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Br. 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:01 p.m. on the 28th day of June at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Steward, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present with the exception of Darryl and Anita Holderman. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Dole Ct., Downtown, East Bakersfield, Hillcrest, South, Stockdale, Taft and Wasco. Also present was Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga, OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes and Emma Gonzalez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes of the May 24, 2011 meeting were read and accepted with no additions or corrections. Molly Biggar read the bills. Editor, Basil Zuniga submitted a voucher for \$35.97, for 3 months of AOL. A motion was made and passed to pay the AOL for Editor, Basil Zuniga.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: An application was received for John Talamantes.

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Basil Zuniga reported that Downtown station did better this month. We had one active member, Gilbert Pabro and one retiree, Mickey Cameron and they did a great job. Next month it will be South station's turn. Emma Gonzalez reported that Social and Recreation Committee will have tickets for a Laker game in October and a Dodger game in July. Teresa Ortega reported that the Branch Picnic will be Sunday, October 9th. Trustee Mabel Bullis reported that one book was sold this month, with 1553 remaining.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Treasurer, Molly Biggar presented the Budget for 2011-2012. A motion to accept the budget was made by Molly Biggar, seconded by Danny Blair and passed.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mark Ramirez said that all NALC Health Benefit Plan members should have received a new medical card. The new cards should be used

starting July 1. He also reported that the NALC website has a list of CIGNA discounts. Quest and Lab Tech offer huge discounts for CIGNA. Members need only to take the lab slips from their doctor for any other lab to Quest or Lab Tech and they will accept them. John Ortega reported on JARAP 2011- all 117 zones in the district will be evaluated, this does not mean all routes will be adjusted. The deadline for the adjustments is July 27. The consultations are due this week. Mike Towery reported that the USPS awarded a contract to replace all the engines in the LLV's with diesel. There will be an Audit on July 19th at 6:00 p.m. The Budget meeting will be July 20th following the Steward meeting. John Ortega reported on the Postal Reform Act of 2011 supported by Congressmen Issa and Ross. The Act would create an Authority to solve the USPS financial problems. It would make the USPS employees pay the same for health benefits as all other Federal Agencies, which would double our health benefit costs. The Act would support 5 day delivery and bust collective bargaining. NALC President Rolando and PMG are both responding to negative press and myths.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman is on Annual Leave this week so her report for May and June will be given at the July meeting.

TREASURERS REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$74,686.71
Dues and Income	\$11,262.56
Interest Income	\$ 9.38
Total Balance	\$85,958.65
Expenses	\$22,063.90
Ending Balance	\$63,894.75

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Norma Hamer who donated her winning back to MDA.

The Drawing for \$200.00 would have been won by Patricia Gutierrez of Lancaster if she had been present.

There were 31 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
KIM GERDES

Membership Meeting Drawing

\$250.00!!!*

**Fine Print: As a Branch 782 member, YOU have a chance to win \$250 this month!! But, you HAVE to be present at the meeting when names are drawn...*

NON-MEMBER LIST MARCH 2011

DOWNTOWN STATION

D. Pearce
J. Cruz

SOUTH STATION

100% Union!!!

EAST BAKERSFIELD

100% Union!!!

HILLCREST

100% Union!!!

BRUNDAGE

D. Kinglee

DOLE COURT

S. Hancock

STOCKDALE

A. White
J. Oh
G. S. Saran
P.M. Russel

CAMINO MEDIA

100% Union!!!

ARVIN

C. J. Brown

AVENAL

100% Union!!!

BORON

100% Union!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY

100% Union!!!

DELANO

C.V. Quebral
L.A. Campos

EDWARDS

100% Union!!!

LAMONT

100% Union!!!

McFARLAND

100% Union!!!

MOJAVE

100% Union!!!

RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce
H.G. Blanco
L.M. Montano

SHAFTER

I. M. New
M. D. Voights

TAFT

B. W. Krier
K.J. Hughes

TEHACHAPI

100% Union!!!

TRONA

100% Union!!!

WASCO

100% Union!!!



Basil: We have 394 total Carriers in the complement assigned to all of the cities represented by our Branch—and, of those, *only 18 are non-members*—that means that we are 95% organized!

KIM GERDES, Branch 782 Recording Secretary

Hydrate!!!

by Brian Applegate, Branch 148
North Hill Alternate Steward

Safety Item: Half of all Akron Carriers aren't drinking enough (insert beer joke here)...water. The average person loses 90 ounces (almost 3/4 gallon) daily. Your floor supervisor (sitting in front of the computer, in the air conditioned building) is considered average.

On-the-street Carriers—during summer temperatures—are anything but average! Suggested hydration guidelines for mounted route, LLV baked Carriers, is to drink 3 quarts of water. Park and Loop carriers should drink 4 quarts. Overweight individuals should add 8 ounces for every 25 lbs. excess (insert fat boy joke here).

Severe dehydration can kill. Minimal on-going dehydration has been linked to a slew

of ailments including: elevated cholesterol levels, blood pressure disorders, excessive fatigue, premature aging, hair loss, and impotence (insert sex joke here). Alcohol and caffeine promote dehydration. Three beers or three colas won't really hydrate you...no matter how great they make you feel.

Remember: if you're already thirsty, you're already dehydrated. Water! *It's not just for the toilet bowl!!!*

OUT THERE



This abridged article courtesy of the *Rubber City Letter Carrier* published by Akron, Ohio NALC Branch 148 in July 2011.

Consultations...

by Lawrence Kania, NALC Branch 3
Executive Vice-President

It appears that most of the offices within Branch 3 will be involved in some sort of route restructuring. In the stations that are going to receive FSS mail, management has control over the evaluation and adjustment of the routes. *The rest of the delivery zones will be done through the Joint Process.*

It is important that Carriers understand that the consultations are a critical part of the joint process.

The agreement requires that management has to perform some sort of consultation within 3 days of your 3999, or as soon as possible. It has come to our attention that in many instances no consultations have taken place. It is our position that—in those instances—management cannot use the 3999 to determine your street time. Under the Joint Process, every Carrier will have a consultation with the Local Team to determine the evaluation of your route.

Make sure that you notify them if management failed to perform the required earlier consultation. Under the new agreement you also have the right to request a copy of your 3999 and forward any additional comments to the Local Team.

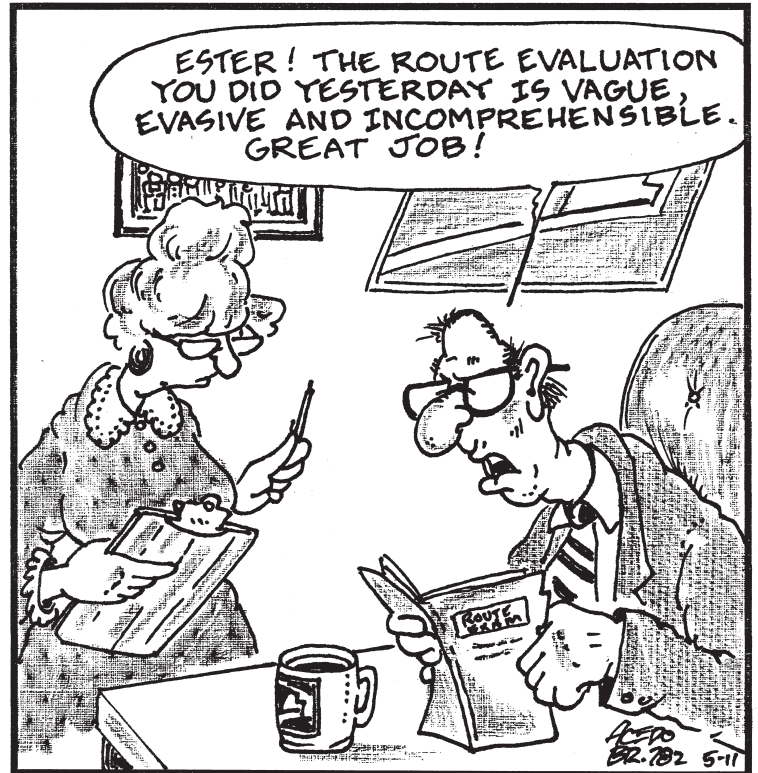
If the Regular City Letter Carrier requests a copy of the representative PS Form 3999 during the consultation, a copy will be provided to the City Carrier by the District Evaluation and Adjustment Team as soon as practicable. If the City Carrier has additional comments after reviewing PS Form 3999, such comments will be immediately forwarded to the District Evaluation and Adjustment Team for consideration in the evaluation and adjustment.

After the evaluation consultation the agreement requires that every Carrier be notified of their final route evaluation. The agreement further requires that each Carrier be notified if that evaluation has changed.

City Carriers will be provided the evaluated time for their routes as soon as practicable after the Evaluation Consultation and in advance of the Adjustment Consultation. Any changes made to the proposed adjustments after the Adjustment Consultation will be communicated with the carrier in advance of implementing route adjustments.

The process places much emphasis on the Carrier's comments during these consultations. If you feel that the 3999 is not representative of your route you should be prepared to explain your position. You should check your 3999 to determine if the mail volume was average or if you had a large

OUT THERE



amount of skipped deliveries that normally you would deliver. You should also check your travel times to the route, within the route and back to the office to ensure that they are correct. The amount of time required to pick up mail for your cuts (PUB's) should also be reviewed.

After the routes are adjusted, another consultation is required. You should get a copy of your adjusted route (PS Form 1840) at least one day prior to your consultation. The left side of the form **must match** the agreed upon office and street times that you were provided with.

Any changes to your travel time or pick up bundle time must also be shown on the form. If you feel the new times are incorrect you should inform the Joint Team. Also make sure that the park points are correct. In many instances in the past, the COR program has established park points in "No Parking" zones.

It is apparent, that over the past 4 to 5 years, the Joint Route Adjustments have become increasingly dependent on the Carriers' knowledge of their route. Each Carrier should know their duties and responsibilities as found in the M-41 in order to convey their concerns during these adjustment processes. We should be taking advantage of all the protections incorporated into these agreements.

Just ask any Carrier in the FSS stations how much input they had in their adjustments and you will find that the answer was "none". Ask them what's happened...

Article courtesy of *The Buzz* published by Buffalo, NY Branch 3 in July 2011.

Letter Carrier's Checklist for the 3999 Evaluation

To help you, the letter carrier, with your next route evaluation, please use this sheet to record important information from the day of your 3999. The information you provide below will assist in the evaluation of your route and help to better insure fairness in the process.

Date: _____ **Day of Week:** _____ **Examiner's name:** _____
Weather Conditions: Hot Sunny Cold Rain Snow Icy Other _____

Start Time: _____ **OTDL?** Y N
Move to Street: _____ if yes: Rte # & start time
Move to Office: _____ & _____
End Tour: _____

Mail Volume: Heavy Average Light
AM @ Case: _____ **Throwback:** _____

Ltrs: _____	Ltrs: _____
Flats: _____	Flats: _____

Did you curtail mail? Y N if so, how much:

Ltrs: _____
Flats: _____

Bypass:

Ltrs: _____
Flats: _____

Coverage: Y N Full Partial _____

Were you INSTRUCTED to curtail mail? Y N
 Did you complete a 3996 (help slip): Y N if so, how much _____
 Did you complete a 1571 (curtailment slip): Y N

Accountable: Heavy Average Light

Express: _____	Insured: _____
Cert's: _____	COD's: _____
Red's: _____	Sign Conf: _____
DelCon's: _____	

Did you sort your Parcel Post on Street Time? Y N
 Did you receive auxiliary assistance on the day of the 3999? Y N

POST: Heavy Average Light

SPRs: _____
Pkg's: _____

Did management give instructions that changed the office or street work methods? Y N if so, explain (on back)

Were you instructed to return by a certain time? Y N time _____

Do you leave for the street based on: volume? Y N or completing the route in 8 hours? Y N

Do you load and unload your truck on Street Time? Y N

Did you make your separations of raw mail on Street Time? Y N

Did you mark-up and endorse mail on Street Time? Y N

Did management ride in the vehicle? Y N
 If so, did the examiner try to influence you to work faster? Y N

Did you receive a consultation by management after completing the 3999? Y N
 If so, did management explain the results and discuss any changes or corrections made? Y N

Was there anything unusual about the day? Please explain: _____

This form is courtesy of the *Buckeye Branch 78 Bulletin* published by Columbus, Ohio NALC Branch 78 in July 2011.

2011 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)	(661) 631-8520
LabCorp Lab Services	(661) 631-9258

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

NALC Drug Prescription
"Claims" Program
P.O. Box 521926
Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2192

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

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

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

Some Websites for You...

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

* *Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by our Plan. MUST notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates.*

** NALC Drug Prescription Program is MANDATORY generic (unless specified by your doctor, at additional cost to member). Preferred retail pharmacy 1st and 2nd fills, you pay 20% of cost of generic/30% of name brand. MAIL ORDER PRESCRIPTIONS when NALC is primary: 60 day supply \$8 generic, \$43 name brand; 90 day supply \$12 generic, \$65 name brand; 90 day supply \$5 for NALCSELECT generics (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$7.99 NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs), **MEDICARE PROGRAM** (when Medicare is primary); Retail network pharmacy: you pay 10% of cost of generic, 20% of cost for name brand, MEDICARE PRIMARY (mail order); 60 day supply \$7 generic, \$37 name brand; 90 day supply \$10 generic \$55 name brand; 90 day supply \$4 for NALCSELECT generic (certain drugs); 90 day supply \$4 for NALCPREFERRED generic (certain drugs); NALCSENIOR generic antibiotics are available; FREE for a 30 day supply, when Medicare is primary (certain antibiotics only).

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

Check out this PPO: Concentra Urgent Care
9500 Stockdale Highway Suites 100 & 101
Bakersfield, California 93309
Phone: (661) 282-4900
Hours>M-F 8:00 am - 9:00 pm; Sat & Sun 9:00 am - 7:00 pm

Mark Ramirez
(661) 834-5011
YOUR NALC Branch 782
Health Benefits Representative

As a Union member and an NALC Health Benefit Plan (HBP) member, it is great to have the option of making choices with our doctors and facilities under CIGNA. The NALC HBP has developed a Preferred Providers Organization (PPO). Each business has contracted with our Plan to provide services to our members in return for discounts.

When a doctor refers an NALC HBP member for labwork, many times they will provide a form to go to a lab that they suggest you use. This lab may not be on our PPO and you may not be getting the savings that you would get if you use one of our PPO labs. You *can* take that form to a PPO lab to lower both your out-of-pocket expense and the cost to the HBP.

Let me use my own experience as an example of how to save money.

Pay attention. This is about your money!


My doctor gave me a lab slip for blood work. It had another lab's name on the heading, but I took it to QUEST Labs. They perform the same work, but QUEST offers our members—and the NALC HBP—great discounts. (LabCorp Labs also does. And the phone numbers for both organizations are listed on my 2011 NALC HBP information page.) I had my blood work done at QUEST, and I include a copy of the EOB (Explanation of Benefits) that the HBP sent to me showing the detailed cost breakdowns.

My EOB shows that the total billed was \$360.12. QUEST is a PPO that significantly discounts the charge to the NALC HBP.

In my case, the discount was \$290.54. This left \$69.58—and *this amount was paid to the lab by the NALC HBP!* If you look at the bottom line on my EOB, you will see that next to the line which says "Patient Liability", the amount is \$.00. This should get your attention...

If you also look at the comments explaining the remarks codes, you will see "Thank you for using the CIGNA healthcare preferred provider organization network. This represents your savings, so you are not required to pay this amount. This provider is prohibited from billing the patient for the difference. If you have already paid the full amount, please request reimbursement from your provider."

MARK D. RAMIREZ
NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative



National Association of Letter Carriers Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, Virginia 20149-0001
(703) 729-4677 or 1-888-636-NALC (6252)

Member: MARK D RAMIREZ
Patient: MARK D RAMIREZ
Patient Account #: [REDACTED]

Identification #: [REDACTED]
Claim #: [REDACTED]
Paid To: QUEST DIAGNOSTICS
Fed Tax ID #: [REDACTED]

Claim Date: 07/23/2010

EXPLANATION OF BENEFITS												
Provider Description of Service	Dates	Billed Charges	Not Covered	Discount Disallowed	Covered Charges	Copayment	Deductible	Payable	% Paid	Contract Allowance	Coinsurance	Remarks Code
QUEST DIAGNOSTICS												
LAB	05/28/10	139.25		121.06	18.19			18.19	100	18.19		04M
OTHER SERVICES	05/28/10	19.50		16.50	3.00			3.00	100	3.00		04M
LAB	05/28/10	115.00		89.30	25.70			25.70	100	25.70		04M
LAB	05/28/10	31.50		20.64	10.86			10.86	100	10.86		04M
LAB	05/28/10	54.87		43.04	11.83			11.83	100	11.83		04M
Patient Liability												
Total		360.12		290.54	69.58			69.58		69.58		

Claim Summary

Total Billed	360.12
Less Discount Disallowed	290.54
NALC Paid Provider	69.58
Patient Liability	.00

REMARKS CODE:

04M THANK YOU FOR USING THE CIGNA HEALTHCARE PREFERRED PROVIDER ORGANIZATION NETWORK. THIS REPRESENTS YOUR SAVINGS, SO YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PAY THIS AMOUNT. THIS PROVIDER IS PROHIBITED FROM BILLING THE PATIENT FOR THE DIFFERENCE. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID THE FULL AMOUNT, PLEASE REQUEST REIMBURSEMENT FROM YOUR PROVIDER.

934 UNDER THE PRIVACY RULE, WE CANNOT RELEASE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU TO ANYONE WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. THIS CAN BE DONE BY COMPLETING A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORIZATION FORM. THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.NALC.ORG/DEPART/HBP. VERBAL CONSENT IS FOR ONE TIME ONLY AND MUST BE VERIFIED THROUGH YOU. WITHOUT YOUR WRITTEN CONSENT, WE WILL ONLY ADVISE THE CALLER IF A CLAIM HAS BEEN RECEIVED OR PROCESSED.

Applied year-to-date:	Patient	Family
PPO/Non-PPO Calendar Year Deductible	\$.00	\$300.00
PPO/Non-PPO Catastrophic Provision	\$15.00	\$832.32
PPO Catastrophic Provision	\$15.00	\$832.32

* The deductible and catastrophic out-of-pocket amounts listed are cumulative totals as of the end of the processing day. If the Plan corrects or voids a claim, these amounts may change. Please contact the Plan if you would like updated information or visit our website. www.nalc.org/depart/hbp

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Keep This Statement For Your Records. No Additional Copies Are Provided. Page 1

MEMBER COPY

If you are a PTF, read this...

by Steve Layton, North Hollywood Chief Shop Steward, NALC Branch 2902

Stick with me here...The JCAM is a document which enumerates and interprets our contract for management and the union. It serves as the controlling language and describes the boundaries for the agreement.

In Article 7, 3.C. A part-time flexible employee working eight (8) hours within ten (10), on the same five (5) days each week and the same assignment over a six month period will demonstrate the need for converting the assignment to a full-time position.

And, on page 7-24, a JCAM analysis of a binding July 21, 1987 Memorandum of Understanding says, **This specific maximization obligation is similar to that of Article 7.3.C, because it is triggered by a PTF carrier working a relatively regular schedule over a six-month period. However, where Article 7.3.0 requires work on the same assignment, this memorandum requires only that the PTF carrier be performing Letter Carrier duties of any kind.**

What does this all have to do with the price of gas? If PTF's are working full-time hours because there is a full-time need for them, the union can use their work records as a basis to establish new full-time assignments. This makes it more likely that our current employees won't be sent elsewhere when the big bad FSS machine rolls into town. We'll have a few local assignments saved for them. And, if the big bad FSS doesn't displace too many people, in North Hollywood and neighboring installations, we may have left-over assignments into which our PTF's can be promoted.

In the meantime, it is important for PTF's to be constantly aware of another JCAM provision: **7.1.8.3. Over the course of a pay period, the Employer will make every effort to ensure that qualified and available part-time flexible employees are utilized at the straight-time rate prior to assigning such work to transitional employees working in the same**

work location and on the same tour, provided that the reporting guarantee for transitional employees is met.

What does that mean? Basically, straight-time work hours must be assigned to PTF's *before* TE's over the course of the workweek (Sat-Fri). Fundamentally, when these weeks repeatedly require 40+ hours of straight-time work over a six month period, it establishes the need for a full-time assignment. The more full-time assignments, the more jobs saved. If you are a PTF, and you have worked less than 40 hours of straight-time in a week, tell your Shop Steward. Your office may demonstrate a need for a full-time assignment that is being distorted by the schedule you are working. You may be owed hours to which you have not been assigned and a grievance is necessary. Whether you are a regular, a PTF or a TE, we have a better chance of protecting jobs if we can continue to replace needed full-time assignments.

Article 7.3.D. If an office is under withholding at the time the criteria are met, the auxiliary route should be converted to a full-time assignment pursuant to this provision. The new position should be posted for bids and the resulting residual vacancy withheld pursuant to Article 12.5.8.2.

We are currently in a "withholding" situation. A minimum number of vacant routes (according to a pre-inflicted formula) must

be set aside to accommodate displaced regulars when the "expected" number of routes is abolished as a result of the fabulous success of FSS:

It is critical that we establish the appropriate number of regular assignments in our installations. More places for regulars to stay, and places to which PTF's can be promoted. "Withholding" vacant assignments may seem to be going on forever, but it will end eventually. When it does, we'll need experienced Carriers for new career assignments.

Transitional Employees (TE's) in my office, 91606, are among the finest carriers I've worked with in more than 20 years as a Carrier here. In fact, those TE's with which I'm familiar in all the North Hollywood zones: 91601-91607, are well above average...even including the "scabs". Unquestionably, they wish to become career employees. We need to make sure there is at least a chance of maintaining jobs for them.

Article courtesy of *The Mail Bag News* published by NALC Branch 2902 in July 2011.

OUT THERE



Injured on the job?

At The Beginning of Your Claim

by Jeanne Larch, NALC Branch 4374
Compensation Officer

There are many problems with the beginning of a claim. They can begin right after you have filed the claim form. There is no way of knowing if everything is fine or if your form is reaching a “short form closure.” (This is a term used when there is no additional information submitted to your file after it is opened and processed.) This generally happens with CA-1, traumatic injury claims. When you have a traumatic injury, typically a doctor visit happens very quickly after filing the form CA-1.

All of the first medical information should be sent immediately to your file number within days after the form is filed. *Obtain your claim number as soon as possible.* Ask your supervisor, or call the district injury compensation office. Get that claim number and— every time you see your doctor after the date of injury— send in your notes from that appointment. Most doctor offices will give you a copy of the chart notes, some will give it to you the same day, whenever it is get a copy and send it to your file.

When sending in information to your claim always write your claim number in the right-hand corner of EACH page. You do not need a claim examiner’s name; you only need the claim number. Your claims examiner will be assigned soon after more information is received into your file.

If your doctor continues to treat you, the bills need to be sent into the ACS contract bill and authorization unit at the Department of Labor. It is either mailed to the London, KY address or, if your doctor is a registered provider, the office can submit the bills on line. As the billings are processed with your claim number, and the total spent exceeds \$1500, this action warrants attention from a claims examiner. *It is important to get the claim number to your doctor’s office and for them to send in the bills as soon as possible.*

All of this activity moves your claim to an examiner, and speeds up the approval or development letter to be sent to you as soon as possible. Also, your doctor would need a claim number to request

authorization for further treatments or referrals. This is another action on your injury claim that would keep it from being closed because of inaction.

Another aspect of the beginning of a claim is the use of Continuation of Pay (COP). You have 45 days of your normal USPS pay from the date of injury. Use of your COP does not mean that you should neglect to communicate with the DOL or injury compensation department at the district level. In most situations you will receive a letter from your local injury compensation specialist.

If you do not understand this paperwork ask your steward. Every office has a skilled steward to answer your questions and if they cannot they will find out the answer. If you are off work call your steward or the union office. *However, it is your responsibility to get the information flowing to the right channels.* We can help get that started to keep your claim from closing, but it is best done within days of the injury date.

So, do not become complacent if you are using COP and your doctor is treating you and it seems to be progressing in the right direction. If you are the only one who knows how it is progressing, then there is a problem. Your supervisor or management in your office needs to know how long your doctor wants you off work and when your next appointment will be. If you are asked to have a CA-17 filled out, do so, and show all of your restrictions. Your doctor will decide what you can and cannot do. But this information *has* to go to your supervisor.

Any medical information should be sent directly to your file **with your claim number on it on every single page.** Your slips to be off work should be sent on to injury compensation at the district. They need to know that you are in a COP status with the possibility of eventual wage compensation from the Department of Labor, OWCP. If they have record of this it will make the transition to the DOL, hopefully, much easier.

Please!!! Call at the beginning of your claim! Talk to someone that knows the next step! If you do not understand, call and check with your Steward or the union office. These steps are vital to move your claim along at the appropriate stages so you, or your family, does not suffer with lost wage compensation.

Article courtesy of the Center Line, MI July 2011
edition of the NALC Branch 4374 *Front Lines.*



For assistance with submission of traumatic injury or occupational disease claims, contact:

Rick Gerdes at 661-834-2059 or “kgerdes91@hotmail.com”

from the editor-guy

Last month, I mentioned retired Letter Carrier Frank Tesch and said that I would try to have something more about him for the July newsletter.

When I started out as a mailman, Frank had already accumulated over thirty years carrying mail in Bakersfield. At that point, I was oblivious to what that meant.

Now, with almost thirty-two years of doing the same thing, I have a little more understanding of what he was dealing with when I first started working. Each morning, when I stand there in line waiting to clock-on, I listen to the various conversations going on around me and I get to thinking that there is a “sameness” to the routine that I’ve chosen to participate in.

And, I chuckle. Frank didn’t probably think I would stay around very long.

Hi Basil,

Thanks for the June newsletter. We were on vacation the past couple of weeks in & out a lot. No problem mentioning Dad for your July newsletter. He was always very proud of his military service and career with the PO.

He joined the Army in 1941 and was stationed in Hawaii at the Schofield Barracks on December 7th, 1941.

Below is a quote from the 25th Infantry’s history page that describes much of what I recall him talking about. (<http://www.25idl.army.mil/history.html>)

“After the Japanese air attack on Schofield Barracks, 7 December 1941, the 25th Infantry Division moved to beach positions for the defense of Honolulu and Ewa Point. Following intensive training, the 25th began moving to Guadalcanal, 25 November 1942, to relieve Marines near Henderson Field. First elements landed near the Tenaru River, 17 December 1942, and entered combat, 10 January 1943, participating in the seizure of Kokumbona and the reduction of the Mount Austen Pocket in some of the bitterest fighting of the Pacific campaign. The threat of large enemy attacks caused a temporary withdrawal, but Division elements under XIV Corps control relieved the 147th Infantry and took over the advance on Cape Esperance. The junction of these elements with Americal Division forces near the cape, 5 February 1943, ended organized enemy resistance.

A period of garrison duty followed, ending 21 July: On that date, advance elements debarked on Munda, New Georgia. The 35th Infantry, under the Northern Landing Force, took part in the capture of Vella Lavella, 15 August to 15 September 1943. Meanwhile, other elements landed on New Georgia, took Zieta, marched through jungle mud for 19 days, and captured Bairoko Harbor, winning the island. Elements cleared Arundel Island, 24 September 1943, and Kolombangara Island with its important Vila Airport, 6 October. Organized resistance on New Georgia ended, 25 August, and the division moved to New Zealand for rest and training, last elements arriving on 5 December. The 25th was transferred to New Caledonia, 3 February-14 March 1944, for continued training.

The division landed in the San Fabian area of Luzon, 11 January 1945, to enter the struggle for the liberation of the Philippines. It drove across the Luzon Central Plain, meeting the enemy at Binalonan, 17 January. Moving through the rice paddies, the 25th occupied Umingan, Lupao, and San Jose and destroyed a great part of the Japanese armor on Luzon. On 21 February, the division began operations in the Caraballo Mountains. It fought its way along Highway No. 5, taking Digdig, Putlan, and Kapintalan against fierce enemy counterattacks and took Balete Pass, 13 May, and opened the gateway to the Cagayan Valley, 27 May, with the capture of Santa Fe. Until 30 June, when the division was relieved, it carried out mopping-up activities. On 1 July, the division moved to Tarlac for training, leaving for Japan, 20 September.”

Frank and Ruth were married in their home state Wisconsin before moving for a short time to Phoenix, Arizona and then to Bakersfield. From 1947 to 1951 they had three children, David, Anthony and myself (in that order). Before joining the PO he had a brief career with Bakersfield law enforcement. My Mother died in September 2008. They were married over 60 years.

Hope this gives you some information to use if needed.

Mike & Pam Tesch

P.S. Forgot one thinG. My Dad received a Bronze Star for action in the Solomon Islands I believe. Will try to get more/correct information for you.

I was a Veteran with a little less than six years in the U.S. Coast Guard. I had no idea that Frank—like many others of those “old timers”—had experienced combat in WWII. Personally, I was tired of having short hair and started working on a pony tail. Frank never said a word. But, I think he must have wondered.

Once, somebody cut in front of him in line to clock on. I had to laugh as he called that person a “Peckerhead!” Pretty strong language! Years later, I recall laughing because I’d heard that Frank became a school crossing guard after retirement from the USPS. I could almost picture him calling those little kids “peckerheads” as he tried to keep them in line.

Despite what others have said about the fact that he might have had a bit of a short fuse, I never really saw that side of him. He seemed to just roll with everything that came at him.

Frank Thomasy once told me that Frank had gotten a real raw deal when he was working out of Station “A”. For whatever reason, his route was eliminated and he’d been forced to leave and go to another unit.

I have a very vivid recollection of one conversation that I had with Frank Tesch. I mentioned that my birthday was August 26th. He stopped and looked at me. He said, “In all of the years that I was in school, in the military and with the Post Office, I’ve *never* met someone with that birthday. My birthday is also August 26th.” I’ve never forgotten that.

I’m hoping that I will get a chance to visit with him. He’s got to have about ninety years under his belt by this time.

BASIL ZUNIGA

Basil, I was shocked to hear that Frank Tesch (The Old German) was still alive!

As you know my whole mailman career was at Station “A” (or E.B.). Frank had route 501 with the all walking area west of Alta Vista Drive and Union Ave between Nile Place (first known as Nevada Street) and Bernard Street. He had what we would call an “ice cream route”. Kidding, of course!

As a sub I really enjoyed carrying his route: mostly retired people and short swings to carry. All his customers adored him. I remember Frank’s trade mark. Of course, it was his smoke pipe that he always had in his hand. Back then you could smoke at your cases and we all had clamp-on-ash-trays on our cases.

Frank could get hot at times, you know— all the carrying on in the office while hand sorting every piece of mail. Man, those were the good old days!

Basil, I can go on and on. There is so much I could share with you about the old timers at our good old Station “A”. I knew most of the Carriers on the list that was in last month’s newsletter and worked side by side with about fifteen of them.

My question to you is where is Frank Tesch? He was an old guy even back then in 1970. Give me a call if you need more info on some of our old timers. I probably have a story to share with you about each one of them.

Basil, trying to think back forty years ago... Station “A” in 1970 was my rookie year as a Letter Carrier.

As I told you in those days most of the old timers were WWII or Korean Veterans. I was the first Vietnam vet at the time assigned to Station “A”. As I recall, there were others at other stations but not too many. Thinking about those days makes me grin.

Frank always wore his what we called “the bus driver hat”. He was a big guy, and from what I recall, he was usually pretty quiet. He had Route 501; Rudy Magana was Route 500 and Ollie Lewis had 502.

Frank was a real good mailman. His customers adored him on his route. He was not a joker by no means. He was always serious about what he was doing. Once in a great while the other old guys would get him mad about just silly stuff. Al Corrella was always in the middle of getting Frank going. That’s when I first heard someone call Frank “The Old German”.

It was the fun days when everyone got along with each other and even with our carrier foremen and station managers. I really enjoyed working with these old guys they were always giving us subs good advice about how to be good mail carriers. I have nothing but fond memories of these old Carriers and all the positive influence they made in my life and my career.

Semper Fi!

MARIO MUNIZ

A Proud Retired Mailman and
Marine Corps Veteran (661-871-4379)



Frank Tesch sends a salute to us from his home in Bakersfield.

DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than Dec. 31, 2011.

Eligibility

- Applicant must be the son, daughter or legally adopted child of a letter carrier NALC member in good standing—active, retired or deceased. Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.
- Applicant's parent must be a member in good standing of NALC for at least one year prior to making application.
- Applicant must be a high school senior when making application and must submit the form provided at right, signed by the NALC member and an officer of the member's NALC branch. This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters by Dec. 31, 2011.

Requirements

- All applicants must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) in either their junior or senior year. A copy of the official scores from the administering organization must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2012. (Computer-generated printouts of test scores will not be accepted.)
- All biographical questionnaires and secondary school reports must be received at NALC Headquarters by midnight, March 31, 2012.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate

degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.

■ Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.

■ A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.

■ If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.

■ If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.

■ If the NALC member is suspended by his/her local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be cancelled.

Terms of awards

■ The official scholarship judges will award one William C. Doherty Scholarship in each of the five USPS Regions and one John T. Donelon Scholarship. Winners are judged on the basis of secondary school records, personal qualifications and test scores. As in the past, the scholarship judges will consist of experienced persons in the educational field. Decisions of the judges will be final.

■ Doherty Scholarship awards will be \$4,000 per year and the

Donelon Scholarship award will be \$1,000 per year. Each scholarship is renewable for three consecutive years thereafter providing the winner maintains satisfactory grades. Award money will be deposited annually with the college. It will be credited to the winner's account to be drawn upon under the rules and regulations which the college has established for handling scholarship funds. Award money is to be used for required college fees, including room and board and transportation fees.

- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

In honor of NALC's president from 1941 to 1962, the **William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund** will again award five \$4,000 scholarships to children of members in good standing. The **John T. Donelon Scholarship Fund** will award one scholarship in honor of Donelon, longtime NALC assistant to the president. Applicants must be high school seniors and must meet all of the following eligibility criteria to be considered.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date _____ (Please print clearly)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I will be a senior in the 2011-12 school year.

I am the daughter son active
 *stepdaughter *stepson of retired
 *granddaughter *grandson deceased

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. _____ City _____ State _____

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Signature of NALC parent member (or spouse if deceased)	Signature of branch officer
--	-----------------------------

NALC parent's Social Security No.	Title	Date
-----------------------------------	-------	------

Both ACT and SAT test scores accepted.

This form must be returned no later than Dec. 31, 2011 to the NALC Scholarship Committee, in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

* Stepchildren and grandchildren are eligible if they live with the letter carrier in a regular parent-child relationship.



Branch Officers

President	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Vice-President	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Recording Secretary	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
Treasurer	Molly Biggar	(661) 832-0393
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Chief Trustee	Lucinda Martinez	(661) 327-2898
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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the publication staff or of the Officers of the Branch.

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

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

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

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

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

Basil Zuniga, Editor-guy
(661) 397-4330
brzii@aol.com

Juan R. Rodriguez, Assistant Editor
(H) (661) 854-0635
(C) (661) 912-7553

The "S.A.N.E."*

Fred Acedo, Cartoonist

*(Special Assistant Newsletter Editor)
P.O. Box 6532
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532

Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer
(661) 589-1683

Christopher A. Chretien, (Kree-shun)
Branch 782 Special Project Facilitator

NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

Avenal (93203)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Arvin (93209)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
Delano (93215)	Gracie Silva	(661) 325-5526
Lamont (93241)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 589-1683
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Stockdale Station (93309)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
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**Branch 782
Website
www.782nalc.com**

Rick Plummer, Webmaster



National Association of Letter Carriers
"Golden Empire Branch 782"
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California 93301
(661) 325-5526

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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

General Meeting

Tuesday
July 26, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office
2628 "F" Street
Bakersfield, California

OUT THERE



It's almost impossible to stay current with all of the different things happening with Congress and the USPS.

There are forces shaping the work world that you might be facing in the near future.

Come to the meeting to learn more!!!