

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

### E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN  
CALIFORNIA CITY  
McFARLAND  
TAFT

AVENAL  
DELANO  
MOJAVE  
TEHACHAPI

BAKERSFIELD  
EDWARDS AFB  
RIDGECREST  
TRONA

BORON  
LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
WASCO



**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1891**

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## **OFFICIAL NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF "NALC GOLDEN EMPIRE BRANCH 782" AND DELEGATES TO THE 2014 STATE CONVENTION AND DELEGATES TO THE 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION**

### **NOMINATIONS**

Nominations for the election of officers of NALC Branch 782 and delegates to the 2014 State Convention and delegates to the 2014 National Convention will be held at the regular Branch meeting on September 24, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office located at 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing to the Branch Recording Secretary within three (3) days after the nomination is made. Nominations may be submitted in writing provided that they are received by the Branch Recording Secretary prior to the closing of nominations at the regular branch meeting in September. Candidates may accept nominations for only one office. Upon nomination, every nominee must certify that he or she had not served as a supervisor for the 24 months prior to being nominated.

Nominations will be held for the following Branch offices: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, three (3) Trustees; and, MBA/Health Benefits Representative. By virtue of the positions, Branch 782 President and Vice President shall be delegates to both the National and State Conventions.

The term of office will be three (3) years.

### **ELECTION**

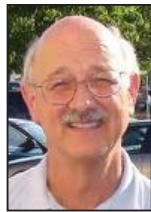
The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 26, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California. Any member who, for any reason, will be unable to vote on November 26, 2013, may obtain absentee ballots by submitting a signed written request to the Election Committee, Golden Empire Branch 782, 2628 "F" Street, Bakersfield, California 93301. Absentee ballots must be requested after nominations have been closed but no later than November 12, 2013.

Write-in votes are not permitted.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR BRANCH FUNDS**

Of the delegates from the Bakersfield local area selected to the State Convention and National Convention, the requirements of eligibility for Conventions funds will be; attendance at ten (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the State Convention; and then (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the National Convention. Of the delegates selected from the outlying Associate Offices (excess of thirty miles from Bakersfield), the requirements of eligibility for convention funds shall be: attendance at least two (2) meetings (any combination of regular General Meetings and/or Quarterly Area Meetings) in the twelve months just prior to the State Convention.

at the  
**Mike:**



There was some good news released that you probably did not hear in a lot of the media. That is that the USPS showed a \$330 million year to date profit BEFORE the (non-cash) “trust fund” charge!

The main stream media will more than likely be reporting the following:

The US Postal Service issued its required 2nd quarter financial report today, claiming a loss of \$740 million for the 3 months ended June 30, bringing the year to date loss to \$3.9 billion. The Postal Service has suffered 7 consecutive quarters of net losses and has had net losses in 16 of the last 18 quarters. The net loss of \$3,870 million for the first nine months of the year included \$4,200 million of expense accrued for the legally-mandated prefunding payment for retiree health benefits.

***BUT YOU NEED TO CHECK THE FOOTNOTES TO GET AT THE TRUTH.***

The **ENTIRE** loss (and then some!) was due to the infamous PAEA trust fund requirement! Buried in Note #2 on page 7 is this: “Without that \$4.2 billion charge, which exists only as an accounting entry, *the USPS would be showing A PROFIT of \$330 million so far this year.*” (emphasis added) ***THAT*** is exactly what the NALC has been saying all along! *Without that pre-funding requirement, THE POST OFFICE HAS BEEN OPERATING WITH A SURPLUS!* In spite of the drop in first class mail volume, there is **NO** need to slash service to the public.

The bad news is that—as we approach the middle of summer—there still has been no real progress on reforms based on reason and facts. It is political theatre!

Once again, Congressman Issa has authored a bill that had the same flawed reasoning in an attempt to dismantle the Post Office. And, in what is no surprise to anyone: the bill passed his committee on a strictly partisan vote. California State President John Beaumont’s article on page 3 explains in detail the bill submitted by Issa.

MIKE TOWERY  
NALC Branch 782 President

## —AN IMPORTANT UPDATE—

The Postal Service just released its third quarter financial report, and I wanted to share this with you right away.

Postal finances are improving. Excluding the pre-funding expense, USPS would’ve have recorded a \$660 million profit. In addition, shipping and package delivery revenues increased dramatically — in the third quarter, shipping and packages revenue increased by 8.8%.

As NALC President Fred Rolando says, “The Postal Service’s latest quarterly report makes clear that its finances are rebounding strongly as the U.S. economy improves. Given this, it makes no sense to degrade service or dismantle a network that is performing well and that provides Americans and businesses with the world’s most affordable delivery network.”

Unfortunately, the congressional pre-funding mandate continues to be a burden. This quarter, pre-funding accounted for more than 100 percent of losses. Continuing this policy just doesn’t add up. No other company or organization in the country has to deal with this issue.

And pre-funding puts good postal jobs at risk by damaging USPS finances and limiting innovation.

We need to raise our voices together to tell the real story. Spread the word about pre-funding.

Sincerely,  
Jim Sauber, NALC Chief of Staff August 9, 2013

# Will **YOU** join the fight to Save 6-Day Delivery and prevent the PMG and Congress from Dismantling the Postal Service?

By John Beaumont, President  
California State Association of Letter Carriers

Today, by a strictly partisan 22 to 17 vote, Congressman Issa rammed through the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform his Postal Reform bill, HR 2748. While not one Democratic Representative supported his legislation, Chairman Issa and the Republican Majority members on the committee decided that the best way to reform the Postal Service would be to dismantle it.

How bad could this bill be? Well imagine a bill that would eliminate more than 100,000 postal jobs, end Saturday mail delivery, discontinue door to door service to nearly 40 million American households adding an additional \$1 billion in debt to the USPS in conversion costs, abolish our no lay-off clause provisions in our contract, and mandate the terms of our future collective bargaining agreements. Well, Issa's Postal Reform bill, HR 2748, contains all of these provisions and more. And—if that wasn't enough—this bill does not even address the largest fiscal issue facing the Postal Service by failing to provide any long-term solution to the disastrous and unfair pre-funding burden.

Prior to the hearing our members launched a barrage of calls to our other two committee members from California, Congresswoman Jackie Speier and Congressman Tony Cardenas encouraging them to support our NALC supported amendments and not support the final vote for HR 2748. Both representatives listened to your concerns and voted to protect our interests throughout the day. Unfortunately the numbers were stacked against us even before the hearing started and as the day went on vote after vote went against our interests and the interests of the American public including the final passage of the bill out of committee. The CSALC wishes to thank all our members who took the time to call these representatives the day of the hearing in our effort to solicit their help on the bill.

The following five amendments were presented by members of the committee who believe in responsibly reforming the Post Office for both the patrons and the employees. The NALC also backs these amendments:

**1. Cummings Amendment** – The Ranking Minority Member's amendment would strike H.R. 2748 entirely and thus prohibiting the move to a 5-day delivery schedule and expediting the closure and consolidation process of postal facilities. The Ranking Member's bill would also include his language from the Innovate to Deliver Act of 2013; H.R. 961, the United States Postal Service Stabilization Act; H.R. 1431, the Postal Employee Appeal Rights

Amendments Act of 2013. The inclusion of these bills would permit the Postal Service to offer non-postal products and services, recalculate the FERS surplus using Postal-specific assumptions and return any surplus.

Vote (22 Against to 17 For – Amendment fails)

**2. Tierney Amendment** striking section 306 – this would eliminate the Chairman's provision to remove Postal employees from the Federal workers' compensation program into a Postal-specific program.

Vote (22 Against to 17 For – Amendment fails)

**3. Lynch Amendment #1** striking section 102 – this amendment would eliminate the Chairman's provision requiring the Postal Service to convert existing addresses from door delivery to a curbside or centralized delivery point. The Chairman's bill would require the Postal Service to convert 30 million addresses by 2022.

Vote (22 Against to 17 For – Amendment fails)

**4. Lynch Amendment #2** striking section 301 – this amendment would strike the Chairman's provision to prospectively prohibit the use of anti-Reduction-in-Force language in collective bargaining agreements.

Vote (22 Against to 17 For – Amendment fails)

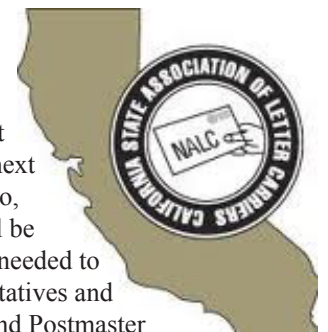
**5. Lynch Amendment #3** striking sections 501 & 505 and replacing the sections with H.R. 961

Vote (22 Against to 17 For – Amendment fails)

Even with this setback, the bill still must be scheduled by the Speaker for an overall vote by all the members of the House of Representatives, including votes on even more amendments to try to correct many of the onerous provisions Issa has written into the bill. Then if it is passed by the House it must be taken up by the Senate, which at this time is working on their Postal Reform legislation.

Taking this into account, we must prepare our membership for the next move. National President Rolando, and our DC Legislative staff, will be working with us on what will be needed to lobby our congressional representatives and our patrons so we can stop Issa and Postmaster General (PMG) Donahoe in their ill-advised plan to dismantle the United States Postal Service. **NOW** is the time for all of us to join the fight to Save 6 – Day Delivery and prevent the PMG and Congress from Dismantling the Postal Service. Everyone's livelihoods are at stake.

Can we count on **YOUR** help?



# Johnny on the Spot



Recently, NALC Branch  
782 President Towerly,  
Mike Meza and I  
attended the NALC  
Region 1 Leadership  
Conference.

Mr. Lew Drass, NALC  
Director of City Delivery,  
attended and presented  
this important message:

## Third Quarter Results Show Clear Signs of Financial Improvement

The Postal Service is in much better financial shape than advocates of a slash-and-shrink approach to Postal Service “reform” care to admit.

The latest financial results confirm that an unprecedented and unnecessary Congressional mandate — not the Internet — is the main cause of the Postal Service’s financial challenges. *In fact, without this mandate, the Postal Service would have reported year-to-date profits.* It makes no sense to cut services like Saturday mail and door-to-door delivery if those services aren’t driving the Postal Service’s red ink.

Here are the **FACTS**: Postal finances are improving as the economy improves. *Really? YES!!! YES. THEY ARE!!!* Read on...

Operating revenue grew by 3.6 percent in the third quarter compared to the same period last year, and expenses were down. Shipping and package delivery revenue is increasing dramatically, up 8.8 percent this quarter compared to the same period last year, and up 7.5 percent on a YTD basis. Revenue from shipping and package delivery has steadily increased over the past three years. The growth resulting from an exploding e-commerce sector is increasingly offsetting the negative impact of online communication and bill payment on First Class mail.

***IF NOT FOR PRE-FUNDING, USPS WOULD HAVE REPORTED A PROFIT THROUGH THE THIRD QUARTER THIS YEAR.*** In 2006, Congress passed a law mandating that the Postal Service “pre-fund” future retiree health care decades in advance on an *accelerated* schedule. From 2007 to 2012, ***THESE*** payments accounted for nearly 80 percent of the Postal Service’s reported losses—***AND IF NOT FOR PRE-FUNDING***—the Postal Service would have reported a \$660 million profit in the third quarter of FY 2013 year-to-date! ***Without pre-funding, USPS would be profitable!***

**THIS** mandate costs the Postal Service billions each year! USPS has already put aside **ALMOST \$50 BILLION** to cover the health premiums of its future retirees for decades. The Postal Service is the ***ONLY*** company or agency in the country required, by law, to PRE-fund retiree health benefits.

The solution is obvious: Eliminate Mandatory Pre-Funding. Free the Postal Service to take full advantage of the growth opportunities offered by the digital era.

# Frankly Speaking...

It has been a long time since I have written an article for the Branch 782 newsletter.

For several years, the Postal Service, and its employees have been under fire from the US Congress. We have fought off attacks before. We have met the financial obligation imposed by Congress before. However, because of the declining mail volume and therefore reduced revenue and as the cost of postage has increased, public opinion is more important than ever.

Recently, the Postmaster General tried, unsuccessfully, to unilaterally eliminate Saturday delivery. This would have eliminated many Letter Carrier jobs. Obviously, the Postal Service does not care about your job. If you want your job, it is going to be up to **YOU** to preserve that job!

Almost kinda sorta retired Letter Carrier David Carlyon sent me an article entitled, "Should the U.S. Postal Service stop delivering mail to your door?" The article involves the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee signing off on a proposal to phase out door-to-door mail delivery, indicating this would save money because the U.S. Postal Service is losing billions of dollars every year. The article further states that Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) the committee's chairman, says the Bill, which he introduced, would help reduce Postal Service's losses. This proposal would mandate NDBC delivery to *every* single address. The article goes on to project potential savings; however, in the final statement, the article states: "The fate of the USPS, as Postal Service Inspector General David Williams said earlier this year, may ultimately be between ceasing to exist or receiving a bailout."

This just indicates that **YOU** cannot rely on Postal Service Management to help protect your job. **YOU** cannot rely on Congress to protect your job. **YOU** can only count on yourself to protect your job. **YOU** must become vigilant in how to protect your job. **YOU** have been told countless times to contact your Congressional legislator. **YOU** must make every attempt to inform family, friends, and patrons about the financial situation of the Postal Service.

The Postal Service operates 100% off of revenue generated by its own charged services. The only tax monies received are for franked mail and matter for the blind. *The current financial situation could be alleviated if the Government did not demand that the Postal Service pre-fund retirement benefits for 75 years, in advance at about \$8 billion per year.* This started in 2006 and was designed to reach full funding in 10 years.

The Union has promoted a hiatus in the payments, until the Postal Service can recover from the loss of mail volume and thus loss of revenue. I have found that our Congressional representatives like to misrepresent words to the public. When the public hears the word "bailout" they automatically think their tax money is going to be utilized in a "bailout". Chances are, if you call Congressman McCarthy's office, they will say they don't believe the Postal Service should be bailed out. That is what Congressman McCarthy wrote for the Bakersfield Californian some time ago.

**Let people know that we do not want money from the Government; we only want to delay the \$8 billion payments until the economy improves.**

It is important that Letter Carriers provide the best service they can. As an example of public opinion, I have included a facebook conversation that I had concerning a photo envelope that was delivered to an acquaintance of mine. It illustrates, through several replies, public opinion when we are perceived not doing our job.

FRANK THOMASY  
Former Branch 782 President



The screenshot shows a Facebook post by Don Kelley from July 12, 2013, at 1:02pm from Hollister, CA. The post asks, "What f'ing part of 'photos, do NOT bend' does the U.S. postal service not get??? No wonder they are broke! Can you stand all the intelligence?!? Amrrrrpppp!!". Below the post are two photos of a white envelope with a blue border, showing significant damage and bending. The envelope has a 'POSTAGE' stamp and a return address. The photos show the envelope from different angles, highlighting the damage to the photos inside.

Like · Comment · Share

3 people like this.

- Toni Sheplewicz - Susan "Centerfold" (July 12 at 1:07pm via mobile · Like)
- Frank Thomasy (July 12 at 1:08pm · Like)  
Usually, with pictures, you can slightly bend pictures, to fit in a rural box, and it will not harm them. I'm sure if they felt there was a problem, they would have left a notice and had you pick it up at the P.O.
- Don Kelley (July 12 at 1:10pm via mobile · Like) (x3)  
Oh no Frank... this was after I guiled all of the other mail and a wadded up newspaper off of them. Pictures are damaged. Maybe they need to put instructions in multiple languages or in cursive so it seems I.Q. appropriate! So tired of lame efforts.
- Frank Thomasy (July 12 at 2:20pm · Like)  
If it is damaged, take it to the P.O. and file a complaint. It is the best way to correct a carrier that damages mail. Only if you complain, will the P.O. know that there was a problem.
- Jean Rogers (July 12 at 2:37pm via mobile · Like)  
They don't understand the word "fragile" either! Sent my grandmother's necktie all wrapped up in bubble wrap to my niece Sara in Chicago, with "fragile" written all over the box. At least half of them were broken when they got there. GRRRRRRRR
- Richard Sparks Bradley DL... (July 12 at 4:07pm · Like)  
...that did it... I'm going back to carrier pigeon! And that's that LMAO!
- Don Kelley (July 12 at 5:11pm via mobile · Like)  
You know it would normally not be a big deal because I know as a government employee they don't particularly care about quality... but these photos were of my own Scott's graduation... taken by the school photographers... and can NOT be reproduced... the files are gone already... but who cares right? As long as the stuff gets crammed in the box... job over.
- Frank Thomasy (July 12 at 5:40pm · Like)  
Not all government employees are like that. I took pride in delivering mail. I do know of employees that did not and was pushed by management to just deliver mail as fast as they could. That being said, the best way to ensure your delivery is to go to the post office and take the envelope with you. Show them the type delivery you received.
- Maria Frazzochi (July 12 at 5:51pm · Like) (x1)  
hey... poor lucky the package showed up at all! They have been losing a lot of our stuff lately...
- Don Kelley (July 12 at 5:57pm via mobile · Like)  
if just expect, since I, a taxpayer, funding a losing institution, would figure that management would attempt to eliminate the failure without people like me, who take on 100% of the burden of my success or failure as a businessman, who pays without fail... too soon
- Frank Thomasy (July 12 at 8:00pm · Like)  
Wow! Took that to a whole different level. Good luck.
- Dylan Downer (July 12 at 8:00pm · Like)  
if I ever in charge of the postal service I would limit mail delivery to one day a week to the door in a box. Talk about efficient!

# Minutes of the July 2013 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 July, 2013 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt at Arms, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present, except Trustee, Mabel Bullis. The stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Downtown, Hillcrest, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Wasco. Also present was the Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga; S.A.N.E., Fred Acedo; OWCP Rep., Rick Gerdes; Photographer, Anita Holderman; Asst. Treasurer, Debbie Guillet; and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The minutes of the June 25, 2013 meeting were read and accepted with the correction of the spelling of Molly Biggar's name.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** An application was received from Marisela Rodriguez.

## REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

Basil Zuniga reported that "we got it done with very few members from Stockdale present." Basil discussed the cell phones that carriers are being given which will link to the scanners, so that customers can track their packages throughout the day. These phones have GPS; management will be able to track carriers throughout the day. Basil reported that the newsletter was printed on different paper this month and that he still needs the new software for the Smart Barcodes. Andrew Garcia reported that Glen Ryder, from Dole Ct., is planning a BBQ cook-off and horseshoe tournament.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Molly Biggar reported on the changes to the 2013 Budget. Molly then made a motion to accept the changes, seconded by Norma Hamer and passed. John Ortega reported that he has not had a meeting of the By-Laws Committee yet.

They will meet following the steward meeting.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery reported that the AO's have changed their reporting times. He discussed two bills in the congress, one sponsored by Cumming that would have \$25,000. buy out with 1 year added to CSRS and 2 years added to FERS. Issa's bill is going to committee with only 2 sponsors. Mike discussed the issue of CCA hours. Mark Ramirez reported that the framed poem was presented to the Sombrotto family during the ceremony to rename Br. 36 as the Vincent Sombrotto Branch. John Ortega made a motion that the branch purchase a flat screen TV to use for Steward training and to show news feeds on legislative issues. The purchase will include a wall mount and extended warranty. Seconded by Mike Munoz. A discussion was held and the motion passed.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION:** Mike Towery asked if anyone has had the standup regarding the "heat." He will give the stewards a copy of the standup. Camino Media has the cell phones and they have been upgraded to allow scanning while it downloads information.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that the adjusted income for May is \$17,734.14, adjusted June income is \$6553.21 and the income for July is \$6522.16.

## Shari Sharp Wins the \$500!!



Shari Sharp, surrounded by friends, is surprised at her good fortune!



Pictures by Branch 782 Photographer Anita Holderman.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Bigger reported:

Beginning Income	\$72,474.18
Dues and Income	\$11,266.22
Interest Income	\$ 5.77
Total Balance	\$83,746.17
Total Expenses	\$10,058.28
Ending Balance	\$73,687.89

The 50/50 Drawing was won by Debbie Guillet.

The Drawing for \$500.00 was won by Shari Sharp.

There were 40 members present. The meeting adjourned at 7:39.

KIM GERDES  
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary

## NON-MEMBER LIST JUNE 2013

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

**AVENAL (93203)**  
B. Howard

**BRUNDAGE (93307)**  
D. Kinglee

**ARVIN (93209)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**DOLE COURT (93308/12)**  
Sharon Hancock  
Dana Morris  
Oscar Salazar

**DELANO (93215)**  
L. A. Campos  
C. V. Quebral  
E. C. De La Torre

**STOCKDALE (93309)**  
J. Oh  
S. G. Flippin  
M. R. Martinez

**LAMONT (93241)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**McFARLAND (93250)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**CAMINO MEDIA (93311/13)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**SHAFTER (93263)**  
L. M. New  
M. D. Voights

**MOJAVE (93501)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**TAFT (93268)**  
B. W. Krier  
K. J. Hughes  
T. D. Bullard  
A. M. Rodriguez  
A. R. Veach

**CALIFORNIA CITY (93504)**  
S.T. Ivory

**BORON (93516)**  
J. L. Wiggs

**EDWARDS AFB (93526)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**WASCO (93280)**  
V. L. Sipe

**TEHACHAPI (93561)**  
N. G. Rodriguez  
R. H. Sadorra

**DOWNTOWN (93301)**  
S. Kirby  
J. Cruz

**TRONA (93562)**  
E. W. Christiansen

**SOUTH STATION  
(93304)**  
D. Hurtado

**RIDGECREST (93555)**  
B. J. Leroy  
H. G. Blanco  
S. R. Pierce  
C. Briede Newton  
C. Celaya

**EAST BAKERSFIELD  
(93305)**  
*100% UNION!!!*

**HILLCREST (93306)**  
E. Chavez



**We are an "Open Shop".  
MEMBERSHIP IS VOLUNTARY.  
366 Letter Carriers are in  
the complement assigned to cities  
represented by our Branch.  
33 ARE NON-MEMBERS.  
We are 90.16% organized!**

# A TRIBUTE TO VINCENT R. SOMBROTTO A GREAT NALC LEADER

As most of Branch 782's general meeting attending members and our loyal Branch newsletter readers may know by now, I have written poetry for our newsletter over the past 25 years.

I wrote a tribute poem for NALC President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto who passed away earlier this year. I was given permission by our membership to spend up to \$200.00 to have this poem framed, matted, and shipped to Mrs. Sombrotto as a way of paying our respects to the memory of such a great labor leader.

Here is a short recap of this project.

It was always my intention that this piece be presented to Vince's family. Our newsletter editor, Basil Zuniga, suggested I call Mr. "Manny" Peralta at NALC headquarters in Washington, DC. He is currently our national Director of Safety and Health and is our past National Business Agent from California. I called to see if it would be feasible for Manny to deliver this item to Mrs. Sombrotto and family. Basil also drafted a letter to NALC President Rolando from NALC Branch 782 President Mike Towery. That letter requested permission to have Mr. Peralta present this item to the Sombrotto family on our behalf.

I received a phone call from Manny on Friday May 5th at about 5:30 pm Washington DC time. He called to tell me that he realized the significance of this framed poem and wanted to let me know that NALC President Fredric V. Rolando planned to present it to the Sombrotto family. He would keep me posted.



Mr. Sombrotto's "home Branch" is NALC Branch 36 in New York City.

They announced their plans to rename their Branch after Vincent R. Sombrotto. The Sombrotto family would be present and Fred's plan was that my poem would be unveiled to Mrs.

Sombrotto, his family—and possibly a few hundred members of Branch 36 during the renaming ceremony. Manny also indicated that photos would be taken....

WOW !!!! This is something I had not anticipated. But, I believe, my words do honor the memory of "Vinnie" Sombrotto and I hoped all present at the renaming ceremony would feel the same.

On the night of July 23, 2013 (upon returning home from Branch 782's general meeting) I received a phone call from Manny Peralta. It was 8:20 p.m. California time, so it was about 11:20 pm East coast time. I began by apologizing that neither Mike Towery nor I had returned President Rolando's phone calls to each of us to tell us about the presentation of the poem at Branch 36's renaming of the "Vincent R. Sombrotto Branch 36 Union Hall".

Manny told me there was no need to apologize. Fred Rolando had received phone calls from both Mike Towery and me and Manny was returning those calls. First, Manny relayed that Fred told him that it took Fred and past National President Bill Young *fifteen minutes* to unpack the poem at the presentation. Manny shared that he would have loved to have been able to attend but his daughter was getting married in California and he felt that he should be there instead...

He also told me there were photos taken at the presentation, and that I should contact Branch 36 President Charlie Heege to request copies of any photos. I sent an e-mail to Charlie the next day, requesting that he forward any photos, along with a photo of the poem hanging in the Vincent R. Sombrotto Building.

This is the message that I sent: Hello Charlie: My name is Mark D. Ramirez, I am a retired Letter Carrier from Bakersfield, California Branch 782, and the NALC Health Benefits Representative for our Branch. I am the author of the Vincent R. Sombrotto tribute poem. I missed the call from National President Rolando, but Manny Peralta called me Tuesday evening, informing me of the presentation of my poem to Mrs. Rae Sombrotto and family. I packaged this item as though I was shipping the Mona Lisa. I understand it took Fred and Bill Young fifteen minutes to unpack it. (I did carry for 30 years, and a Carrier should know how to package an item of value!)

I understand there were a number of photos taken at the presentation of this poem and the renaming ceremony. If it would be possible, I would like to receive any photos of the reading and presentation, and a picture of this plaque hanging on the wall in your Branch 36 building. I wrote this poem tribute—with the utmost respect and admiration—for a one-of-a-kind Branch 36 Letter Carrier, past Branch 36 President, and past National President of the great National Association Of Letter Carriers.



If this will be possible, my Branch president Michael Towery would like to have the photos sent to his email address (vp782nalc@aol.com). His cell number is 661-331-9171.

If you need to contact me, you have my email address, and my cell number is 661-204-5592. I hope to hear from you, and I sincerely hope my poem is well received at the Vincent R. Sombrotto Branch 36 office.

THANK YOU.....Mark D. Ramirez

In a subsequent phone call, Manny made sure to tell me that President Rolando read my poem to Mrs. Rae Sombrotto, the seven Sombrotto children and the other attendees. Fred said, "Mrs. Sombrotto 'absolutely loved the poem!!!'" Mrs. Sombrotto shared that since Branch 36 was Vince's second home that the poem should remain at the Vincent R. Sombrotto Branch 36's union office.

**A**nd Now—as Paul Harvey would say— For the Rest of the Story: Charlie Heege did send me the photos from New York along with a short message:



These three pictures are courtesy of Paul Curry, NALC Branch 36 in New York City.

**“Here are the photos. Mrs. Sombrotto liked the poem so much, she took it home with her.”**

MARK RAMIREZ  
Branch 782 HBP Representative  
and “poet-at-large”



NALC President Fredric V. Rolando presenting Branch 782's Vincent R. Sombrotto tribute to Mrs. Rae Sombrotto and family members.

# 2013 NALC HBP Info

## At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CVS/CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
<b>NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
CVS/CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
<b>CIGNA Dental Discount Program</b>	<b>1-877-521-0244</b>
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
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
<b>Shared Services (Retirees Info!!!)</b>	<b>(661) 477-3273</b>

**NALC Health Benefit Plan**  
**20547 Waverly Court**  
**Ashburn, Virginia 20149**

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

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

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

**"Non"-Medicare Claims Submit to CIGNA**  
**(Payor I.D. 62308) or mail to**  
**P.O. Box 18804, Chatanooga, TN 37422-8004.**

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

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

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

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

**Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782 HBP Rep.**  
**(661) 834-5011**

**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	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">http://www.cdc.gov</a>
American Public Health Assoc.	<a href="http://www.alpha.org">http://www.alpha.org</a>
American Cancer Society	<a href="http://www.cancer.org">http://www.cancer.org</a>
American Heart Association	<a href="http://americanheart.org">http://americanheart.org</a>
American Lung Association	<a href="http://www.lunusa.org">http://www.lunusa.org</a>
Diabetes Foundation	<a href="http://www.diabetis.org">http://www.diabetis.org</a>
<b>YOUR Personal Health Record</b>	<a href="http://www.nalc.org/depart.hbp">http://www.nalc.org/depart.hbp</a>
Asthma Information Center	<a href="http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma">http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma</a>

**Accupuncture!! Must be a state licensed or certified accu-puncturist. Chiropractic! State licensed chiropractor or D.O.**

**Check out this PPO: Sendas Northwest Urgent Care**  
**3409 Calloway Suite 101**  
**Bakersfield, California 93312**  
**Phone: (661) 587-2500**  
**Hours: M-F 8:00 am - 9:00 pm; Sat & Sun 9:00 am - 7:00 pm**

Boy, if this doesn't hit the nail on the head, I don't know what does!

## TWO DIFFERENT DOCTORS' OFFICES

Two patients limp into two different medical clinics with the same complaint? Both have trouble walking and appear to require a hip replacement.

The FIRST patient is examined within the hour, is x-rayed the same day and has a time booked for surgery the following week.

The SECOND sees his family doctor after waiting 3 weeks for an appointment, then waits 8 weeks to see a special-

ist, then gets an x-ray, which isn't reviewed for another week and finally has his surgery scheduled for 6 months from then.

Why the different treatment for the two patients?

The FIRST is a Golden Retriever. The SECOND is a Senior Citizen.

Next time take me to a vet!

If this is REALLY how you feel, it is vitally important that you make a rational decision to choose the NALC Health Benefit Plan for your health care and the health care of your loved ones.

# VETERANS CORNER

## September 2013 Message: The Affordable Care Act and You

On March 23, 2010 President Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law and the intent of its passage is to expand access to health-care coverage, control health-care costs, and improve America's health-care delivery system. Under provisions of the ACA's "individual mandate," all Americans are required to purchase medical insurance by January 1, 2014.

Under the ACA, most individuals will be required to have minimum essential health-care coverage for themselves and their dependents. If people do not have the minimum coverage, they will have to make a payment when filing taxes for each month they lack coverage. This payment will either be a flat fee or a percentage of taxable household income.

For example, you would pay \$95 or 1 percent of your taxable income for 2014, \$325 or 2 percent in 2015, \$695 or 2.5 percent in 2016, etc. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care meets the law's standard for coverage. Therefore, veterans already enrolled in VA health care would not be eligible for assistance in lowering the cost of their health insurance premiums, if they were to purchase additional health-care coverage outside of VA.

Veterans may still purchase private health insurance, on or off the marketplace, to complement their VA coverage. If veterans are enrolled in VA, they do not need to take additional steps to meet the health-care coverage standards of the ACA.

VA wants all veterans to receive health care that improves their health and well-being. Veterans and other beneficiaries wishing to enroll in VA health care can apply for enrollment at any time. <https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/>

Last week, VA began sending letters to enrolled veterans to highlight its web page (<http://www.va.gov/health/aca/>) on the ACA, and to answer any questions about the requirements of the law. The bottom line: the ACA does not change VA health benefits or veterans' out-of-pocket costs. And if you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your veterans' health-care benefits and the Affordable Care Act, please contact The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. <http://www.va.gov/health/aca/>

(Source: American Legion and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.)

Thank you again from the NALC, Branch 3, and 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 Mark S. Leon, 716-631-3940 or e-mail [MrR2Leon@aol.com](mailto:MrR2Leon@aol.com).

# The Peachy Hat 2 Adventure: NEW YORK CITY!!!

Now that I have been a City Letter Carrier for 8yrs now, almost EVERY new city I visit, I feel compelled to find another City Letter Carrier and strike up a conversation. (This is not Basil....It's Mabel! hehehe)

While visiting New York for the first time in early August, I was able to do just that. I first talked to a lady Carrier who worked at Hellgate Station. I wasn't ready with a pen and paper and didn't get her name or any other info but she did tell me that all the routes in New York are walking and that she had 1000 deliveries! Say what?!?!?

I have 1050 possible deliveries and that is not all walking! They also do not have LLVs. All that are parked at the station are the 2 Ton trucks. Throughout the city, I'm assuming, is relay routes because I saw those metal mail receptacles with no slots for outgoing mail, just the arrow lock key, on street corners.



I did, however, run into another Letter Carrier and this time got his information and a picture! His name is Michael Richards, Cathedral Station Post Office of Branch 46. He has been a carrier for 24 years. He is very nice and social, not a "typical" New Yorker who just walks by you. As I left him to do his route and continued to sight see, I then came to a street corner and behold....he was already across the street, passing me! FAST and great at their job!! That is what I gathered from the 2 Carriers in New York!

I did also see a "fellow New Yorker" utilizing a USPS hamper as he ran by me. Found the lonely, abandoned hamper on the street later and took a picture. hahaha

The humidity! All that walking! I know that we all have to adapt to our ever changing environment but boy, oh, boy! I wouldn't move to New York if you paid me! It is a very lively city. Central Park is the most beautiful place to visit, especially being in the "heart" of a bustling city. As we went up to the 86th and 102nd floor of the Empire State Building, it over sees the most spectacular views of the city in all di-

rections. Times Square is just packed and dirty to me.....hehehe. There are some colorful characters for sure there, waiting for you to take pictures with them. The trash! Nothing like I've seen or SMELLED!! There are no trash cans, just bags and bags on the side of the street waiting for the trash collectors. The New York cab drivers, oh my! That is an exhilarating experience in itself. I love the need

for speed but these drivers are NUTS! hehehe They weave in and out of traffic missing another vehicle by INCHES! Even though there are "lines"....it's not utilized. They are VERY good at their jobs. Didn't see a pedestrian hit once.



My cousin lives in Manhattan on the 3rd floor in a 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartment and pays \$2600 per month rent. Um-mmm, I don't think so! Taxis off the bat start off at \$2.50 and increases as the fare continues. A 5 block ride was \$7.50 including tip. The New York pizzas are really good. They have Toll on the freeways.

Don't get me wrong.....New York is amazing!! Put it on your "bucket list" one day .... hehehe

Bottom line.... be THANKFUL for what you have in front of you, no matter if you work here or there. I am grateful for and love my job!

MABEL S. BULLIS



# Safety and Health

by John Fire,  
NALC Branch 385

When you think about the many different types of motor vehicle accidents that letter carriers are involved in, rollaway/runaways are among the ones that have the greatest potential for serious or even tragic results.

I know there have been cases where postal drivers have backed over pedestrians and I'm not taking this type or any other accidents lightly, but there is just something terrifying about an out of control vehicle with no one behind the wheel about to strike someone or something.

Rollaways occur when the vehicle is shut off and for whatever reason, it starts to roll forward or backward. This could be due to the vehicle not being put in park, not setting the emergency brake, or having an emergency brake that isn't working properly.

The fleet of vehicles that we're driving, especially the LLV's, are very old and worn out. That is why it's very important to do a thorough vehicle safety check each morning. There have been many cases reported of worn out linkage, gearshifts not working properly and emergency brakes that aren't holding the vehicle in place.

Please make sure you take the time to check your vehicle and report any safety deficiencies immediately. When the Postal Service investigates accidents the first thing they look for is driver error and NOT mechanical failure.

Runaways occur when the engine is running and it jumps into gear (usually reverse).

I have watched footage from surveillance cameras which have captured Postal vehicles pulling up to a business, the driver getting out with the engine running and then watching the LLV take off in reverse and going in a big circle until finally striking something. In one case you can see the panic-stricken driver chasing after the vehicle, trying to jump in and then fall and nearly be run over.

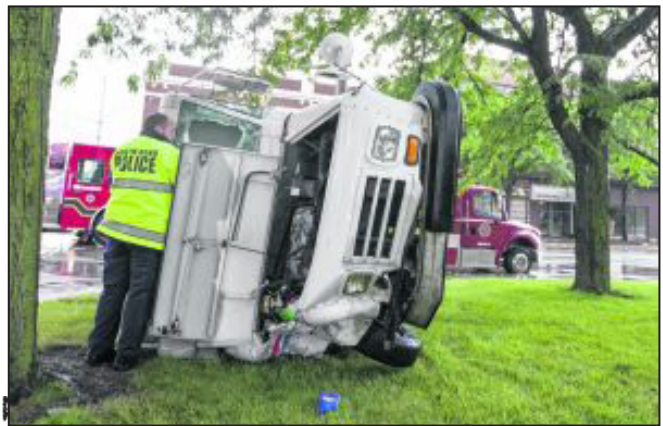
It doesn't take much effort to shut a vehicle off or turn it back on. All that is required is a simple turn of the wrist. It's really difficult to defend someone who has put themselves in that position and the discipline is usually pretty severe, so intentionally leaving an unattended vehicle running is a pretty foolish thing to do.

That being said, there have been cases where our drivers have unintentionally been involved in runaways.

Here are two examples of recent accidents and a picture of a third in the Eastern Area involving runaways:

1) A Regular City Carrier was delivering a mounted route. The employee stated that when he inserted the mail into the mailbox it pushed out the back of the box. He unbuckled his seatbelt, opened the door, stood up, and went to reach around the back of the box to close the back door. He leaned too far and fell out of the vehicle. The engine was running and the vehicle crossed over a section of the customer's driveway and into the yard. The vehicle traveled approximately 75 feet and struck a tree.

2) A PTF Carrier was delivering mail to a curbside box. When she pulled up to the box in her LLV, she put the vehicle in Neutral but could not reach the mailbox. She unhooked her lap-belt and subsequently slipped out of the vehicle. The vehicle rolled approximately 150 feet, crossing three lanes of a six-lane highway and came to



Fortunately no one was seriously injured in these accidents, but the potential is obviously there.

No one starts the day off thinking they may cause an accident and they usually occur so fast that there is little or no time to react. Once it happens there is no turning back.

I realize that in many of our offices there is a lot of pressure being put on regular carriers to capture under-time or for CCA's to carry an entire route plus two hours or more from another and be expected back at some unreasonable time.

Safety should never be compromised and management and craft both need to realize it.

Article is courtesy of the Youngstown, Ohio NALC Branch 385 Relay published in July 2013.

# from the editor-guy

I was just in southern Oregon to celebrate my mother-in-law's 80th birthday. It was a fun and relaxing family time.

While I was there I made a very simple observation. Because Marcelle's parents have both been retired for quite some time now, the rythm of their lives is not dicated by a clock. They are busy and productive doing things which need to be taken care of—in a routine which they have chosen for themselves!!

Those of us who haven't retired deal with a very different existence, don't we?

With that said, I want to offer my congratulations to the recently retired Annie Franey who started carrying mail on November 27, 1978.

Annie carried mail out of Stockdale. *Boy did she!*

Although she spent her entire career as a 93309 Carrier, her PTF world was filled with numerous stints when she was sent to help out at 93306, 93307, and 93305. Some of her "jaunts" lasted up to two-weeks. It's no wonder that—as Annie put it—"I was a PTF forever!"

When able to bid an assignment, Annie started out as a T-6. She went on to 925, 914, 908, 924 and finally, 919.

Somewhere in the midst of all of those assignments, she was also a Router for

awhile. (If the term "Router" doesn't ring a bell, ask one of the old timers... On the other hand, I may be able to find an Acedo cartoon somewhere that might give you some idea.)

Annie Franey wears another distinctive hat. When she married in 1981, she became the wife of Letter Carrier Ray Franey. While Ray has decided that he wants to stay around a little longer, Annie won't be standing at that time clock any more in the future!

Together, Ray and Annie raised three children and now have the joy of grandchildren to add spice to their lives. Annie's glad that she only has to walk across the street to visit one of her children to take care of those grandma chores!

Her initial introduction to her postal duties was carried out by Letter Carrier trainers John Howlett and Rudy Aros. She remembers Al Labarge, George Perez, Chris Pimenta as some of the old timers when she first started out. They're all retired now.

She also remembers when then-Letter Carrier Art Ornelas bid into Stockdale. Ultimately, he retired as the Bakersfield Postmaster.

Oh...Alex Dang (who was there when she first started out)? *He's STILL there!*

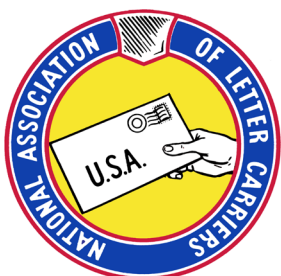
In the process of looking back, Annie offers these words to those of us who haven't retired yet, "It's not worth getting all upset about a lot of the changes that might be coming. You're going to adjust. Try to keep a good attitude"

OUT THERE



Editor-guy disclaimer: This cartoon in no way is intended to portray Annie Franey as a Router. Fred Acedo had an "Out There" moment.

## "Last Punch Bunch" Banner



For those of you, who would like to brighten up a wall and say it BIG when celebrating a fellow Carrier's retirement at a retirement celebration, PLEASE utilize this banner just by signing up for it.

It belongs to the all of us—WE are the Union!  
Contact any of the Branch 782 Trustees.



# Branch Officers

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<b>Vice-President</b>	<b>John Ortega</b>	<b>(661) 809-8140</b>
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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the publication staff or of the Officers of the Branch.

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

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

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

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

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

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Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer  
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(559) 801-8645

## 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)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
McFarland (93250)	Bonnie Whitbey	(661) 302-7354
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Taft (93268)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Wasco (93280)	Jerry Patterson	(661) 699-2462
Downtown Station (93301)	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
South Station (93304)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 487-5353
South Station Alternate	Judy Kiyoshi	(661) 817-5529
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar	(661) 327-7637
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Pam Smith	(661) 979-5854
Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Dole Court (93308)	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Dole Court (93308)	Shari Sharpe	(661) 364-5544
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Mojave (93501)	Vacant	
California City (93504)	Russell Day	(760) 373-8963
Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93526)	Vacant	
Tehachapi (93561)	Mary Morphis	(661) 822-6614
Trona (93562)	Lynnell Howell	(760) 371-1039
Ridgecrest (93555)	Lynnell Howell	(760) 371-1039

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

**Rick Plummer, Webmaster**



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Bakersfield, California 93301  
(661) 325-5526

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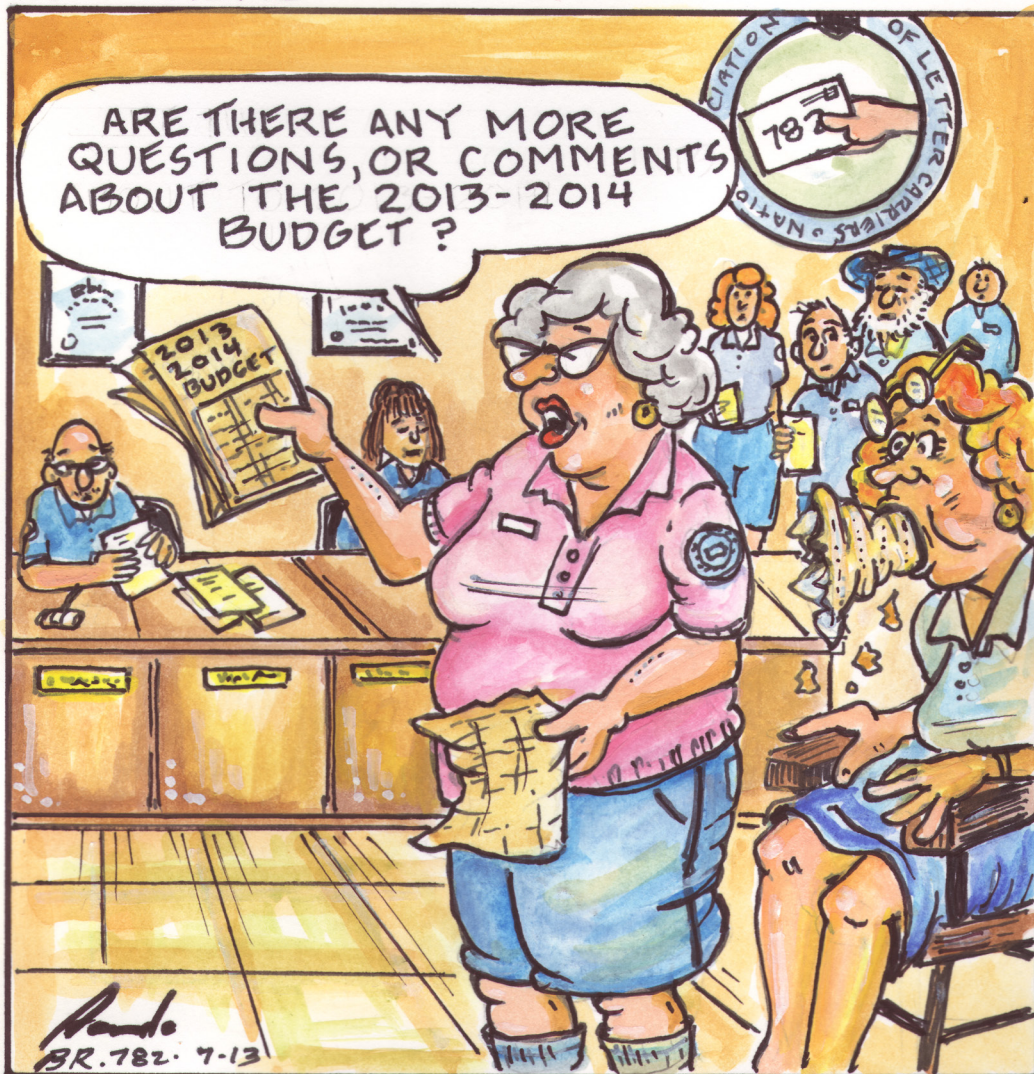
# General Meeting

Tuesday  
August 27, 2013  
7:00 p.m.

Branch 782 Office  
2628 "F" Street  
Bakersfield, California

**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

OUT THERE



*We had  
a winner  
of the*

**\$500!**

*For details  
see  
page 6.*

*This month  
YOU have  
a chance  
to win  
\$50!*

Don't forget to check out the web version of this newsletter! More is better... Go to [WWW.782NALC.COM](http://WWW.782NALC.COM)