

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



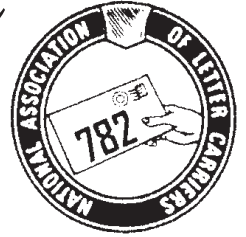
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SEPTEMBER 2020

August 31, 2020

Statement from NALC President Fredric V. Rolando

Mail Service Issues

Letter Carriers are angry, frustrated, and embarrassed by the widespread reports of mail service delays. We take great pride in serving our customers. But a combination of ill-conceived USPS initiatives and misguided communications — combined with COVID related staffing shortages — have resulted in delayed mail and nondelivery of routes throughout the country. The Postal Service has also initiated other operational changes that have made the Letter Carrier job more difficult and less efficient. To make matters worse, all of this has happened while Letter Carriers are dealing with the fear and anxiety of serving on the front lines through a deadly pandemic.

We receive daily reports from the field regarding delayed mail and undelivered routes. We provide this data to USPS headquarters, holding them accountable for identifying and correcting the source of the directives.

If or when you have instances of delayed mail and/or undelivered routes, please inform your NALC Branch 782 Officers, Shop Stewards or your NALC Region 1 National Business Agent Bryant J. Almario.

These and other issues are addressed in more detail in the full message which can be located on pages 2 - 5 in this web version

"OuT tHeRe"



Congratulations to California Association of Letter Carriers

Saxsenmeier Scholarship Winner Manreet Sodhi, daughter of Branch 782 member Sarbjit Singh Sodhi



Manreet is planning to build on the solid family foundation that has been her bedrock. Success in education at Bakersfield's Ridgeview High School is going to be parlayed into pursuit of a degree in the field of Veterinary Science at U.C. Davis.

CSALC President Harold Kelso stated that, "There have been siblings who have been winners of the Saxsenmeier Scholarship." Manreet's older sister, Ashleen Sodhi, was an award winner in 2017. Kelso also went on to point out that, in 2020, the State Association awarded ten \$1,600 scholarships to children and grandchildren of both active and retired California Letter Carriers.

A more in-depth feature can be found on pages 12 - 14 in this September web version. (Additionally, an application form for the national NALC Doherty & Donelon Scholarships is made available on page 15 .)



National Association of Letter Carriers

Fredric V. Rolando
President

100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC
20001-2144
202.393.4695
www.nalc.org

Brian Renfroe
Executive Vice President

Lew Drass
Vice President

Nicole Rhine
Secretary-Treasurer

Paul Barner
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer

Christopher Jackson
Director, City Delivery

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We receive daily reports from the field regarding delayed mail and undelivered routes. We provide this data to USPS headquarters, holding them accountable for identifying and correcting the source of the directives. If and when you have instances of delayed mail and/or undelivered routes, please inform a NALC branch representative or your NALC national business agent. We will continue this communication until these service issues are resolved.

Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS)

In early August, NALC initiated a national-level grievance regarding the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of the delivery initiative test called Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS). The ESAS initiative substantially alters the Expedited Preferential Mail process and other delivery practices and procedures outlined in the Handbooks M-39 and M-41. These changes directly impact terms and conditions of employment of city letter carriers in violation of Article 19 of the National Agreement. Implementation of this headquarters initiative, as well as many locally induced variations of this initiative, have been responsible for many of the instances of delayed preferential mail and non-delivery of routes, or portions of routes. As a result of our discussions, the Postal Service terminated the ESAS initiative effective 8-19-20, and we are exchanging drafts for the grievance settlement.

Sorting Equipment Rationalization (SER)

Another initiative is the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of what it calls Post Office Sortation Equipment Reconciliation (SER). On July 31, 2020, USPS notified NALC of the SER initiative and characterized it as a "review" which would solicit "feedback" from employees. However, subsequent documentation shows that the Postal Service has instructed local management to reduce casing equipment and cell sizes causing widespread violations of the handbooks and manuals while making casing more difficult and less efficient. A national level grievance has been filed on the SER initiative as well. In the last few days, the SER initiative has been halted pending our discussions with the Postal Service on the program.

Park Points

We have also had reports in some parts of the country of management dictating that park and loop routes must be reconfigured so that there are no more than four park points on such routes. These appear to be misguided local directives, so if this is happening in your office, please immediately notify your branch representative or your national business agent so we can get it corrected.

USPS Management Restructure

The Postal Service is currently in the process of transitioning to a new organizational structure consisting of three separate operating sectors: Retail & Delivery, Logistics and Processing, and Commerce. The current field structure for processing and delivering the mail consists of 67 Districts within 7 Areas that report to a

Headquarters COO. Under the new structure, the delivery and retail sector will consist of 67 Districts (for now) within 4 Areas reporting to one Headquarters COO, and the processing and logistics sector will consist of 12 Divisions within 2 Regions reporting to another Headquarters COO.

Regardless of the operational structure of the Postal Service, NALC will continue to prioritize safe and efficient work methods, good service to our customers, dignity and respect in the workplace, and contractual compliance. Regarding delivery operations, we hope we've seen the last of unilateral implementation of reckless initiatives, and we look forward to working with the new operations team in our joint task forces to accomplish our common goals.

Article 34 Study

Pursuant to Article 34 notification to NALC, an outside company hired by the Postal Service recently began conducting a study of city carriers' office activities in about 36 sites. Their stated objective is to observe letter carrier office duties and to collect data to potentially develop new work methods or standards.

NALC will continue to send a local or regional representative into each site prior to the study beginning to explain the study to the letter carriers and answer any questions they may have. Once the data collection is complete, those representatives will return and obtain feedback from the carriers involved in the study. NALC headquarters will continue to monitor this test closely and exercise its rights as necessary in accordance with Article 34 of the National Agreement. Letter carriers are reminded to continue performing their duties as they normally do, and in accordance with Handbook M-41 provisions.

This was one of several initiatives implemented by the former postal operations team who chose to proceed unilaterally rather than working with the NALC through the joint *City Delivery Task Force* incorporated in the National Agreement. We are discussing with the Postal Service whether this unilateral study will be continued, and if so, how the data will be used.

Consolidated Casing Initiative (CCI) Update

On June 3rd, we settled a national-level grievance regarding the Postal Service's unilateral testing of Consolidated Casing. This settlement, M-01923 in NALC's Materials Reference System, required that half of the 62 test sites be returned to their original route structure by July 31, 2020. The remaining 31 test sites will continue through November 27, 2020.

While the consolidated casing has been terminated in the first 31 sites, about half of these sites were not returned to their original route structures and schedules, resulting in non-compliance grievances. Some of the non-complaint sites have been corrected, and we will continue to work with the new operations team to correct the rest.

Annual Leave Carryover

The pandemic has made it difficult for letter carriers and others to make plans for use of their annual leave during the leave year 2020. Several weeks ago, I approached the Postal Service about entering into an agreement to increase the maximum number of annual leave hours (currently 440) that could be carried over from the 2020 leave year to the 2021 leave year. I am optimistic we will have such an agreement soon.

Collective Bargaining and Interest Arbitration

We are well prepared to begin the Interest Arbitration hearings for a new National Agreement. At the same time, we have continued negotiations with the Postal Service in an attempt to reach a tentative settlement that we could send out to the membership for a ratification vote. We will either reach a tentative agreement in the next couple weeks, or we will begin the hearings which are scheduled to commence on September 23rd.

COVID-19 Testing

I reported in my July 15th statement that the Postal Service had completed their testing of temperature measuring equipment and had identified a company that will provide technicians to conduct what they describe as highly accurate COVID-19 testing in postal facilities. Since then, we have exchanged drafts regarding procedures and protocols for further proof of concept tests in a couple of USPS locations that would include both mandatory temperature measurements and voluntary on-site testing. We appear to be in agreement regarding the procedures, and I anticipate testing the concept will begin shortly and last about 30 days. Once we work out any issues from the test locations, we will discuss if, where and when to implement the agreed upon protocols to help curb the spread of the virus.

Presidential Election

On August 13th, the NALC Executive Council voted unanimously to endorse the Biden/Harris ticket for president and vice-president in the upcoming election. The political diversity of our membership is one of the many strengths of our union, and we respect the political opinions of our members that range from the far left to the far right, and everywhere in between. While we all share the desire to protect our wages, benefits, working conditions, and to ensure the success of the Postal Service, not every member makes their voting decisions based on how it will affect their job or career. How members vote and what issues matter most to them is their business.

and their decision. However, for our members that do base their voting decisions on how it affects their jobs and careers, NALC will always provide information on where candidates stand on those issues, poll our members on their preferences, and ultimately make an endorsement of the candidate that best serves the job-related issues facing our members. This time around, the member polling data, candidate questionnaire responses, party platforms, and candidate positions on postal issues made the endorsement choice easy.

Election Mail Task Force

On August 18th, I announced that the NALC will begin working with the Postal Service in a joint labor management task force to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus with regard to handling of election mail. Formation of the task force comes as a result of my initial meeting with PMG DeJoy, where I suggested that we create a joint labor management task force to meet these specific challenges and work together in response to the public health crisis that is expected to dramatically expand the role of mail voting during the upcoming national election. Meetings of the joint task force on election mail will begin next week. We will work to establish messaging and protocols ahead of the election to ensure the expedited handling of all political and election mail, particularly for mailed out ballots, and to assure the public and our election board partners that they can rely on the Postal Service to deliver exceptional service.

Vote by Mail Fact Sheet

NALC has created a new fact sheet called *The 2020 General Election: America Can Count on the U.S. Postal Service*. In the fact sheet, we explain such things as the USPS history and role in voting by mail, our capacity to deliver the anticipated high volume of ballots, our well established protocols in place regarding election mail, as well as why the public can feel confident that their ballots will be handled in a safe and secure manner. The fact sheet can be found on the 'legislative activities' page of the 'Government Affairs' section of the NALC website.

Legislative Update

Since my last statement, there has been no meaningful progress in negotiations between House and Senate leadership and the White House regarding financial relief for the Postal Service in a new stimulus package. Last week, the House of Representatives passed the *Delivering for America Act*, a stand-alone Postal bill that would provide \$25 billion in direct financial relief to the Postal Service and ensure that no changes in service can be made that would result in delays during the pandemic. The previously passed *HEROES Act* from the House, and the Senate's *Postal Service Emergency Assistance Act* were both explained in my statement from July 15, 2020.

Whether the negotiations materialize into a stand-alone Postal bill, or a broad stimulus bill, NALC will continue to lobby aggressively for direct financial relief, favorable loan terms, and hazard pay. Again, for more information on how to take action, please visit the 'Government Affairs' page on the NALC website, and continue to encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to do the same by visiting www.HeroesDelivering.com.

To support our lobbying efforts, NALC commissioned a poll in May on the importance and funding of the Postal Service during the pandemic. The results of that poll clearly showed that a broad sample of Americans overwhelmingly support both the Postal Service and its direct funding through an appropriation. In July, we once again commissioned North Star Opinion Research and Hart Research Associates to survey 1200 registered voters aged 60 or above across the nation, 25% being veterans. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed support federal financial assistance for the Postal Service in the next stimulus, the figure is 90 percent among veterans.

Both groups, furthermore, say that their votes in the fall election will be strongly influenced by whether their elected representatives help provide the Postal Service with the same support provided to other sectors of the economy. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed said they would be less likely to vote for lawmakers who oppose federal support for USPS, a figure that rises to 70 percent among veterans.

Not surprisingly, this poll overwhelmingly demonstrates that the Postal Service is important to their lives and well-being as indicated by 96 percent of the voters polled, 99 percent of the veterans, 97 percent of those in rural communities, and 94 percent of those registered as Republicans.

Media Storm

The Postal Service finds itself at the center of the media universe, and at the crossroads of politics, election planning, and legislative maneuvering. The current state and future of the Postal Service have the attention of the entire nation, as public support for protecting the level of service they rely on and securing its financial health continues to grow. The bottom line is that the country highly values our services in normal times, yet with the upcoming election and the new world pandemic, the American people need their Postal Service more than ever. The recent lapses in service have placed legitimate fears in the minds of the public regarding the Postal Service's ability to deliver what they need, when they need it.

So amidst the media storm, NALC will continue to directly focus on what we are doing internally and externally to keep our letter carriers as safe as possible through the pandemic, to restore service disrupted by misguided directives and initiatives that have caused delays and non-delivery, to prioritize our commitment to successfully handle the increased volume of mail ballots and restore the

public's confidence in our ability to do so, and to secure the pandemic-related appropriations from Congress. At this point in time, using the media to effect change would be a last resort.

COVID-19 Cases

Just as the number of people throughout the country affected by the pandemic continue to rise, so do the number of postal employees being affected. Today, almost 5700 postal employees are under quarantine from the virus. Almost 44,000 previously quarantined postal employees have been cleared and returned to work. About 1800 of the currently quarantined postal employees have tested positive for the virus, and another 400 plus are presumed to be positive. Another 7600 postal employees who tested positive in the past have recovered and returned to work. Of all these numbers, about thirty percent are letter carriers. Sadly, 83 active postal employees have passed away from the virus, including 18 city letter carriers. We have been notified of 4 retired members who have passed away from the virus as well.

Thank you for all that you do. As you continue your heroic work serving the American public each day, please take every precaution regarding social distancing and face coverings. God bless each of you and your families, please stay safe.

This is Further Important Updated Information Maximum Annual Leave Carryover Amount Increased from 440 Hours to 520 Hours For Leave Year 2021

NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that increases the maximum allowable annual leave carryover amounts outlined in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM). **FOR LEAVE YEAR 2021** (emphasis added), regular work force career employees covered by the USPS-NALC National Agreement may carry over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2020 to leave year 2021. ***Normally, as defined in ELM 512.321(a.), bargaining unit employees have a maximum leave carryover of 440 hours.***

Families First Coronavirus Response Act Impact on Retirement and Thrift Savings Plan

The NALC has received notification from the Postal Service that leave taken under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act is NOT eligible for retirement and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) deductions. This is in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management which oversees both benefits.

Those that have taken leave under the FFCRA will be issued refunds by the Postal Service for any retirement and TSP contributions which will be reflected on your October 2, 2020 paycheck.

Leave used under the FFCRA (Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act Expansion) will not impact creditable service time towards retirement eligibility. This leave does not impact the High-3 Average Salary calculation used for an annuity computation. The annuity calculation for full-time career employees will NOT be impacted.

However, use of FFCRA leave for part-time career employees **WILL** have an impact on annuity calculations. Annuities with a part-time career component are prorated based on the hours worked when compared to a full-time position. Leave taken under FFCRA is **NOT** considered basic pay and is treated similarly to periods of Leave Without Pay (LWOP), which does not increase the total hours worked for the part-time component calculation. ***NALC members may contact the NALC retirement department with questions regarding part-time career service.***

Carriers that wish to, may change their election of FFCRA leave to a different type of leave (such as sick or annual) to keep their retirement and TSP contributions. To avoid a refund, all requests must be entered in AdjustPay before September 11, 2020.

All TSP eligible employees may change their TSP election at any time during the year.

The FFCRA will expire December 31st, 2020, and any unused leave will be forfeited.

A Postal Service Mandatory Stand-Up Talk regarding this refund should have been presented August 27, 2020.

This information was sourced from the NALC website.

“NEVER judge a book by its cover”

Facebook Post August 11, 2020 @ 7:58 P.M.
shared by Mrs. Frank (Janet) Thomasy

This will be a long post. Not forcing anyone to read it. If you do, it's just thoughts in my head lately that I'm sharing. Take from it what you will. It's your choice.

I have no doubt that a majority of you have walked out to your mailbox and grabbed your mail and placed most if not all of it in your recycling bin on your way into your home. Cussing the ads and “junk”. *This* is the perception that the general public has of the U.S. Postal Service. We just deliver a bunch of crap that you don't want anyway. So, the general public looks at the cover of that book, judges us, without opening it to view it's true contents. So, I decided to share some of those contents with you and maybe help change some of your perception.

There are a good number of you at home right now during this very difficult time. We all are wondering and worrying about what's going to happen next. I guarantee you, that if you watch closely today, you will see a postal vehicle in your neighborhood. Why? ***Because regardless of what is happening in our country, we WILL be out there providing a service to the American people!*** Probably the only service that you get that you are not taxed for... The postal tax was done away with in the early 70s. So yes, through catastrophes, extreme heat, brutally cold temps, blizzards, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, exhausting Christmas seasons, or whatever is thrown at us, we WILL be out there for you.

We also are not supposed to leave mail for the next day. So, if five carriers call in to work on one particular day, that's 40 hours of work that the others have to make up in that day. We don't have the luxury of leaving after eight hours and picking up the next day where we left off. *So when you see a mail carrier out delivering at 10 pm, it's not because they are slow and lazy — they probably had many down routes that day.* On the day of the earthquake here, our office alone was down 27 routes without a body on them. **I am still mindblown that we pulled that off and EVERY route got delivered.**

Much of the American people take for granted the service we provide and the services we offer. I guess if you went to renew your drivers license and then had to go back and stand in line again two weeks later to pick it up it wouldn't be a big deal for you would it? If you registered a newly acquired car at the DMV and had to return and stand in line again to pick up the title, again, no big deal right? Yes, you *can* renew your vehicle registration online; but, *who* delivers that sticker to you? Maybe you live in a rural a location and *now* every two weeks you have to drive 30 miles to pick up your medica-

tion that *used* to get delivered right to your mailbox.

I hear it all the time, “With technology today, we don't need the post office”. “I can live without the post office”. “Why are you guys still around”.

Because you're only seeing the cover of that book.

1639: The first post office is designated in the thirteen colonies in a tavern in Boston Massachusetts. *(I'm wondering if Cheers producers thought of this when Cliff, the mailman, was added to the cast...)*



This picture was from a few years ago. When I put my uniform on each morning, I know the task at hand. I'm proud to wear it, and proud of my job. I help provide a service to my fellow Americans in this great country we live in.

1753: Benjamin Franklin creates efficient postal routes between the 13 colonies.

1775: Benjamin Franklin is appointed as the first postmaster General.

1776: the Declaration of Independence is signed. At this time, there were already 75 post offices in the colonies.

1792: The “Post Department” is formed by our government. It was later changed to the U.S.Postal Service in 1971.

1792: charge for theft of mail = **Death Penalty.**

1830: most violations regarding obstruction of any kind with the u.s. mail becomes a federal crime.

1863: Cleveland Ohio, home delivery is introduced after a gentleman gets the idea from watching women and children stand in long lines in frigid temperatures at the post office waiting for a letter from a loved one fighting in the civil war.

1923: All residential dwellings are required to have a mailbox or mailslot at their home.

From the early 1800s up until the LB Johnson administration in the late 60s, some postal employees carried sidearms as it was part of their job duties to protect the mail at all costs.

1958: The Hope Diamond was donated to the Smithsonian institution. The donation was sent through the mail. Yes, he shipped it through the mail. The cost at the time for postage was \$2.44. He additionally paid \$142.05 to insure it for 1 million dollars. The Smithsonian institution still has this package in their archives.

I agree with you that what is happening economically right now in our country is very scary. 3.4 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week. We are all so uncertain of our future.

This *ALSO* includes the future of the U.S. Postal Service.

Why do I include all of these numbers?

To sum up what could happen if you took the U.S. mailing industry as a whole — not *just* the post office, but ***EVERY*** involved company in the industry from the printing companies to the manufacturing companies of mailing supplies!! ***ALL of it is a whole industry.***

If the USPS closed its doors tomorrow, it would devastate a 1.4 trillion dollar a year industry in our country and essentially place 7.5 million Americans out of work — ***THAT'S 5% OF THE COUNTRY'S TAX-PAYING WORKFORCE.***

I'm adding this here — *for those who aren't aware* — Congress passed a bill requiring the post office to fund benefits 75 years into the future!!!!

SO, THE USPS IS REQUIRED TO PUT MONEY IN A FUND FOR FUTURE EMPLOYEES WHO HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN BORN YET.

Look it up.

WE ARE THE ONLY ENTITY REQUIRED TO DO THIS.

You see your Letter Carrier. We are “the front-line”. However, the vast amount of employees behind the scenes outnumber carriers. Clerks, mailhandlers, machine operators, truck drivers, custodians, maintenance personnel and the list goes on *and*

Editor-guy note: *This Facebook post was originally by a Letter Carrier. I've been unable to verify where he works or his NALC Branch #...*

it takes ***EVERY*** one of us to pull it off. The USPS operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year.

The mail NEVER stops.

So maybe YOU can do without the U.S. Postal Service in your own little world; however, I don't think this country as a whole could.

I mailed a few items and a small package over the weekend. Not because I had to; but, because I wanted to.

When was the last time **YOU** mailed a card to your mom?? Or sent a postcard to a friend when you were on vacation? I am one person and cannot change it all. However, if *every* person changed their habits slightly, we ***could*** move mountains.

The numbers are simple. If every tax-paying American just spent an additional \$20/year on postal services, we ***as a whole mailing industry*** would continue to be a vital part of this country's reinvigoration.

Thank you for reading. Take from this what you choose. ***The next time you utilize services provided by the U.S. Postal Service, you are supporting an American institution that's roots are older than our organized government and our organized military both.*** I hope we will survive for the sake of America. Feel free to share this with others.”

The U.S. Postal Service Today:

485 million pieces of mail processed **DAILY**
121,000 Change of Address forms processed **DAILY**
4,000 addresses added to our system **DAILY**
159 million delivery points **DAILY**
276,000 money orders produced **DAILY**.

(Oh... the money order was created by the Postal Service to lower mail theft from people sending cash)

ANNUALLY: 1.4 BILLION miles traveled by our Carriers to deliver the mail
6.8 million passports are processed.

47% of the **ENTIRE** world's mail is handled by USPS.

We deliver more in **ONE** day than FedEx does in 1 year.

We deliver more in **ONE** week than UPS does in 1 year.

Military post offices currently in 76 foreign countries including 283 post offices on U.S. naval ships which can be anywhere in the world.



Politics Has ALWAYS Been a Part of Your Life as a Federal/Postal Employee — PART I

By Eric Ellis, CSALC District 4 Officer

The PMG's name could have been Steve Mnuchin, or Betsy DeVos, or Joe Blow, it doesn't matter. The president appointed every single member of the board of governors and *THEY* chose Louis DeJoy. If they had picked somebody else, do you really believe he or she would have acted differently?

And as for funding for the United States Postal Service (your employer)... Well, politics plays a part there, too!

We've taken a big hit with the loss of first-class mail from the business sector. I know we deliver more parcels, but it takes more time to sort and deliver those. So we're not making out financially — *despite what the president's defenders say.*

Recently, the House passed HR 8015 which would help the USPS with \$25 billion to get us through the pandemic. And of course, the Senate (as of my writing this message) refuses to take action on the aforementioned Bill.

POLITICS REARING ITS UGLY HEAD AGAIN!

In my next article, I'll discuss how politics affects the lives of those under the Civil Service Retirement System.

I hope by now you realize that — while **YOU** may not take an interest in politics — politicians **DO** take an interest in you. In many instances, it is not in a good way.

When my father was still alive, and before dementia/Parkinson's hit, we talked about the Postal Service often and the role politics played in it. He repeatedly told me that he was the first non-politically appointed postmaster in Santa Clara County.

To explain: Prior to 1971, the position of postmaster was one of patronage (meaning "no experience needed"). If you belonged to the same political party as the president of the United States, well, guess what? **You could be appointed a postmaster!**

One guest at my father's memorial was a former postmaster who was appointed to his position in San Martin (California) in 1963 by John F. Kennedy.

You read that right. *President Kennedy!*

The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 was supposed to *take politics out of the post office*, meaning — among other things — that positions were now to be awarded by merit and the new United States Postal Service (which replaced the old Post Office Department) became a self-sustaining, independent agency of the executive branch of the federal government.

The legislation demoted the postmaster general from membership in the president's cabinet to merely presiding over the USPS and subject to being hired or fired by a board of governors.

This begs the questions: "Is the USPS **truly** an "independent" agency?"

In the past, we've had presidents and other politicians try to meddle in our affairs or attempt to modify our mission and structure. Examples?

Presidents Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump commissioned studies which recommended privatizing the Postal Service **AND** doing away with collective bargaining. Newt Gingrich proposed privatization time and time again while he served in the House. President George H.W. Bush tried to pressure former PMG Marvin Runyon

to raise the price of first-class postage and was shocked that he couldn't fire him.

And, then there was pressure from the White House to insert the "pre-funding" requirement into postal reform legislation in 2006 so as not to make the bill "score" (that is to say) "grow" the deficit).

"OuT tHeRe"



Recent actions by our new postmaster general have made our lives a living hell.

I hear complaints *every day* regarding packages that should have arrived a week ago but are still in transit. A first-class letter takes at least three days in many cases to arrive *from within town.*

If mail does not arrive at the stations or plants by a certain time, well guess what? It stays there until the next day! Whereas, in the past, allowance was made for late-arriving Carriers who worked overtime.

But as I've stated before, **"If it looks like a duck, smells like a duck, quacks like a duck... it IS a duck."**

"OuT tHeRe"



The History of Letter Carriers and the NALC *IS* the story of “Carriers in a Common Cause”

“...In 1883, letter carriers in the New York area banded together to obtain an annual vacation law.

Officially, letter carriers were not allowed vacations. They were supposed to work 365 days per year, including Sundays. The postmaster in New York City, however, permitted his carriers to take ten days of vacation per year, providing their fellow workers agreed to cover the routes of those on vacation.

At the same time, federal employees in Washington, DC — including those working in the headquarters of the Post Office Department — were allowed 30 vacation days per year, a privilege not extended to the employees of the Washington, DC post office.

Frustrated with the discrepancy in treatment and newly blessed with the protections the Pendleton Act had provided them, Washington letter carriers petitioned the Department for the same leave privileges as other federal workers in the city.

Petitioning the Department was unprecedented in the history of the service, and it did not react favorably to this aggressive behavior. The Department’s law officer issued a statement declaring that no law existed under which letter carriers could be allowed any vacation days whatsoever. The postmaster at the New York Post Office was soon ordered to cease giving carriers annual leave.

The New York City letter carriers did not passively accept this Departmental dictate, but rather decided to agitate for an annual vacation law.

Together with letter carriers from several other cities, they approached Congressman Samuel “Sunset” Cox, and in 1884, after a monumental effort, Cox was able to persuade Congress to pass legislation giving all letter carriers—not just those in New York City or Washington—a 15-day vacation, with pay, every year.

A surprising victory, it gave letter carriers first-hand experience in the advantages of organized agitation. Letter carriers throughout the nation were vividly reminded that in unity there is, indeed, strength.

A word about “Sunset” Cox. He was the one great exception to congressional apathy, working long and hard to improve the conditions of letter carriers. A Democrat, a former congressman from Ohio, and a two-term congressman from New York, he took up the cause of the letter carrier within the halls of Congress. It was Cox who was responsible for persuading Congress in 1879 to establish a regular pay scale for letter carriers.

Up until this time, letter carrier pay was set by each postmaster, and glaring inequalities extended from city to city.

The 1879 law created two grades of carriers in the larger post offices, with salaries fixed at \$800 and \$1,000 a year...Congress limited carriers’ wages to \$850 per year, regardless of years of service.”

“The struggle for an eight-hour day is a landmark in letter carrier history. It was also an intense nationwide movement, one involving an enormous number of workers in addition to letter carriers.

The movement began soon after the Civil War. The nation was industrializing, the economy was expanding and labor was beginning to realize its potential strength. The Depression of 1873-79 interrupted the campaign, but by the early 1880s, the movement for an eight-hour day began to revive.

Letter carriers’ involvement began as early as 1868 when Congress passed an eight-hour law for federal “laborers, workmen and mechanics.” The Post Office Department, arguing that its employees did not fit the description, refused to comply.

Frustrated in their attempts to force the Department to reverse itself, angry letter carriers in a number of large cities—New York, Chicago, Omaha, Buffalo, Brooklyn—turned for help in the 1880s to the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, the leading labor organization of the time. Letter carriers formed local Knights of Labor assemblies and many became leaders within the organization.

Like private employers, postal management also vigorously opposed the move ment. And when an eight-hour bill for letter carriers, drafted by the Knights of Labor, was introduced in Congress in 1886, the Department harassed any and all active supporters. Some carriers who led the campaign were fired for minor infractions of work rules. Others were either transferred to less desirable routes, assigned routes far from their homes, given extra duties or ordered to take vacations with no advance warning. In New York City, 150 letter carriers were suspended when the postmaster discovered they were members of the Knights...

... “Sunset” Cox, supported by the lobbying of local letter carrier associations, particularly those in New York and Philadelphia, Congress overrode the Department’s strong opposition and passed the Knights’ eight-hour bill for carriers in 1888...

... For letter carriers, who at that time were working at least 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week, the enactment of the eight-hour bill was an impressive and long overdue victory.

But perhaps more important than the passage of the law were the forces released by the intense ferment of the eight-hour day movement itself..

.... Letter carriers were now ready to organize a union.”

.....
This information was pieced together from pages 7 - 10 in the book
**CARRIERS IN A COMMON CAUSE —
A HISTORY OF LETTER CARRIERS AND THE NALC**

from the
editor-guy

I'm not a Facebook person. I have enough vices.

But, it *is* a good source of communication for many folks I know. My wife, Marcelle, is a Facebook person and she got a message she shared with me.

Pam Monsobias Mauck: *Hi Marcelle, could you please give this info to Basil? Steve Nieto is in the hospital.*

Marcelle Zuniga: *Sorry I didn't message you back. I gave the msg to Pop. He says thank you!*

Pam Monsobias Mauck: *I havent heard anything else. When I hear something I will message you*

Marcelle Zuniga: *Thank you. I'll let Pop know.*

Pam Monsobias Mauck: *I saw this (obituary) on a friend's Facebook page if you could please pass it on to Basil.*

Basil Zuniga: *Thank you, Pam. Homer Ruiz let me know, but this is the first obit I have seen. "Word on the Street" is that Steve was one of "the Good Guys"!*

Pam Monsobias Mauck: *Yes, he was. Most of the group that were there when I started in 1980 were decent guys.*

Paul Greenfield: *I found a retired Carrier obit. It's attached to this message. I didn't know him so I don't have anything to add if you include him in the newsletter.*

I'm glad folks keep me in the loop.

I also passed along the info to a few folks and they replied.

Paul Hernandez: *Thanks, Basil... Prayers for Steve... I worked 12 years with him at E.B. Station.*

Brian Shellcross: *I remember him. Years ago he was a T-6 in E.B. I think I worked with him for about 4 years before he bid out. He liked to cut up with Rudy quite a bit... A nice guy and good T-6. My thoughts go out to his family... So sad... I don't think he was that old really.*

This newsletter serves a number of purposes. Some of them involve passing along information to those who are just starting out their careers as Letter Carriers.

Another "target" audience are those who are looking in the rear view mirror at their lives as Letter Carriers. They may be living out their retirement years in cities other than where they worked. They may not see an obit in the local newspaper.

In this newsletter, at least, they will get a chance to see that one of their old co-workers has passed and is no longer with us.

In Memorium, Steve Nieto.

BASIL ZUNIGA

STEVEN PETER NIETO
October 5, 1940 – August 16, 2020
Beloved Husband, Father, Grandfather and Friend



Steve Nieto passed away of natural causes on August 16, 2020 in Bakersfield, CA. He was born on October 5, 1940 in Los Angeles, CA to Emerenciano and Petra Nieto.

At the young age of one day old, his family moved to Bakersfield, CA. He attended Garces Memorial High School. Prior to graduating, Steve enlisted into the United States Marine Corps from 1958 – 1963. He met Mary Louisa Quirino and they married on May 29, 1965. They shared 42 years together until Mary's death in 2007. They had 5 children together, Gary, Carl, Steven, Yvonne and Christina.

Steve began working for the United States Postal Service in 1968 and continued for 35 years until his retirement in 2003. He met his second wife Mary E. Nieto in 2008 and shared a friendship for 2 years before they married on April 3, 2010. They spent his remaining years creating beautiful memories and taking care of each other.

Steve enjoyed taking drives with no particular destination, dancing, word search puzzles and trips to the beach. He loved watching the Dodgers play and was a die hard Rams fan. He will be remembered for his ability to make friends with anyone he came in contact with, his story telling, and the great man he was.

He is preceded in death by his parents, his first wife, Mary L.; son, Steven; daughters, Yvonne and Christina; and siblings, Rosalio, Mary and Teresa.

Steve is survived by his wife, Mary E.; sons, Gary and Carl (wife, Patty); 6 grandchildren; siblings, Nano, Joe, Gilbert, Angie, and Conchita; and his best friend since 3rd grade, Homer. He is also survived by Mary's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who loved Steve as their own.

A Rosary will be held from 5:00-6:00pm, with a viewing and celebration of life to follow from 6:00-8:00pm on Sunday, August 30, 2020 at Basham-Hopson Funeral Care, 620 Oregon Street. Graveside service will be held at 10:00am on Monday, August 31, 2020 at Historic Union Cemetery, 730 Potomac Avenue.

www.bakersfield.com/obits

Save this with your important papers!

WHEN AN ACTIVE LETTER CARRIER DIES...

- ✓ Notify employee's immediate supervisor, postmaster and personnel section (if any). Give supervisor locker keys and badge as well as information on time and place of memorial services. Check with USPS personnel or postmaster for benefits for spouse and any dependent children.
- ✓ Fill out forms (obtain from USPS personnel section or postmaster): application for death benefits under the retirement system; claim for unpaid compensation; claim for FEGLI death benefits.
- ✓ If the carrier had a TSP account, notify the TSP Death Benefits Processing Unit, Fairfax Post Office, DEDIS—P.O. Box 4450, Fairfax, VA 22038-9998, or call 877-968-3778.
- ✓ Notify the carrier's NALC branch.
- ✓ If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office.
- ✓ Notify banks and other financial institutions.
- ✓ Call the local office of the Social Security Administration or toll-free 800-772-1213.
- ✓ Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the carrier had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, write to 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318. If the carrier belonged to the NALC Health Benefit Plan, write to 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149 or call 703-729-4677. **Note:** Health benefit coverage for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if carrier had family coverage at time of death *and* if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.
- ✓ Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs (they can suggest how many).

WHEN A RETIRED LETTER CARRIER DIES...

- ✓ Notify U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Retirement Operations Center, Boyers, PA 16017, or call toll-free 888-767-6738 and provide: full name of deceased; date of birth; date of death; Social Security number; CSA claim number; and survivor's name, address and relationship to the deceased.
- ✓ For quicker action, provide the above information to NALC's Director of Retired Members, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144, 202-393-4695, or call toll-free 800-424-5186 only on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday, 10 a.m.-noon and 2-4 p.m. (Eastern). NALC will alert OPM so that survivor benefits will commence as quickly as possible, and will send you the application for death benefits under the retirement system, and the claim for death benefits under FEGLI.
- ✓ Return any uncashed annuity checks to the address on the accompanying Treasury Department envelope. If payments are being deposited directly to a bank or other financial institution, contact them with the retiree's date of death and advise them to return any future payments to the Treasury Department.
- ✓ Call the local office of the Social Security Administration or toll-free 800-772-1213.
- ✓ If the retired carrier had a TSP account, notify the TSP Death Benefits Processing Unit, Fairfax Post Office, DEDIS—P.O. Box 4450, Fairfax, VA 22038-9998, or call 877-968-3778.
- ✓ Notify the retired carrier's NALC branch.
- ✓ If veteran, notify the Veterans' Administration local office.
- ✓ Notify banks and other financial institutions.
- ✓ Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the carrier had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association, write to 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144 or call 202-638-4318. If the carrier belonged to the NALC Health Benefit Plan, write to 20547 Waverly Court, Ashburn, VA 20149 or call 703-729-4677. **Note:** Health benefit coverage for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if retiree had family coverage at time of death *and* if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.
- ✓ To request a duplicate 1099R, Statement of Annuity Paid, call 888-767-6738. Callers will need the former carrier's CSA number and the last four digits of their Social Security number.
- ✓ Have mortuary officials obtain enough certified death certificates for your needs (they can suggest how many).

If the spouse of a retired Letter Carrier dies, call the NALC retirement office for instructions on how to restore annuity to full amount, switch health coverage from Family to Self (unless dependent children) and change beneficiaries.

Manreet Sodhi Saxsenmeier Scholarship Winner

Continued from front page...

NALC Branch member Sarbjit Singh Sodhi and his wife, Manjinder, have three children. Their two oldest (daughters Ahleen and Manreet) are both recipients of CSALC Saxsenmeier Scholarships.

The youngest, Parjot, may be feeling a little pressure to follow in his sisters' footsteps; however, Manreet points out that her parents (immigrants from India) have always made education a priority and she knows that her brother will do just fine.

Active in a number of activities during her high school years, Manreet was very diligent in making sure that academics were going to be her ticket to the better life that her parents have worked so hard for her and her siblings to achieve.

Knowing that college would be her next step to reaching her goals, she spent some time touring the UCLA, U.C. Santa Barbara, Cal Poly Pomona and U.C. Davis campuses.

While she was impressed by everything she saw and heard about during her school visitations, Manreet always had her heart set on attending one specific institution. As she puts it, "U.C. Davis has the best veterinary school in the world!"

It is her hope to, one day, have these letters follow her name: "DVM". When she does, she will be a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine!

Manreet knows that she is going to be flexible in doing what she needs to practice her chosen profession.

With a Bachelor of Science diploma in hand, she realizes that further education may lead her to out of state schools; but, she is firm in her belief that U.C. Davis is THE BEST school that she could attend to attain her dreams and she hopes to stay.

She is also looking forward to any possible work as an intern which might come her way. Additionally, when asked if she hopes to be large animal veterinarian, she responded, "Well, I think I would rather work with domesticated pets like cats or dogs. I think it's because my family didn't get a dog until I was in high school."

There was a reason that there was no dog in the family. For anyone who owns a dog, it will come as no surprise to acknowledge that they can be expensive with all of their upkeep and health care needs.

The young Manreet heard a message.

"I was told that, if I got good grades in high school, I could get a dog. With proof that I could do this, I got 'Jessie' — a female German Shepherd - Lab mix. She is now three years old and is still a baby."

Manreet is passionate in her belief that she wants to help low-income pet owners. "I might become involved in a non-profit organization which is trying to make pet ownership more affordable."

Before she get to that point, she is excited about starting the journey. However, her initial college experience is going to be greatly impacted by the on-going nature of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"U.C. Davis classes are going to start in a few weeks. But, they are all going to be online. I am hoping that things will have gotten sorted out by January so that I can experience on-campus learning."

On the other hand, "Jessie" is probably going to be a lot happier since Manreet gets to stay home for a little longer...



In 2020, the California State Association of Letter Carriers will award ten Saxsenmeier Scholarships of \$1,600.00 each. Children and grandchildren of both active and retired California Letter Carriers are eligible. The winners are selected by a panel of professors from the California State University system.

The State Association is made up of seventy branches. Branch and individual donations are the source of funds to this scholarship. Without these generous contributions this valuable resource would not be available to our students. We realize a few branches have their own scholarship funds. The vast majority do not. By donating to the Saxsenmeier Scholarship Fund, your branch or individual donation will help students achieve their educational goals. As you are aware, college is extremely expensive. Many Saxsenmeier scholars have been the first in their families to attend college.

The current selection period is approaching. Even a small contribution can make a difference, especially if multiplied by the generosity of all Letter Carriers in our State Association.

In Unionism,

**HAROLD KELSO
CSALC President**

Who was the person behind the name on the Scholarship?

By Jack J, Woods, updated by the CSALC

Reprinted from the January 1994 Santa Barbara, California Branch 290 *Beast of Burden*

We see names come up in union publications — names like Carl J. Saxsenmeier.

Who were these people? How did they merit having an award, scholarship, etc., named after them? How, in this example, did a California State Letter Carriers Association scholarship come about?

Jack J. Woods, the Branch 290 Historian, sent us the following. Thanks again to Jack for his research and sharing his knowledge with us!

Each fall the readers of *The Beast of Burden* see an application for the Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship Award. Ever wonder who he was?

Carl Saxsenmeier, affectionately known as “The Man,” was born in the Mission District of San Francisco on March 13, 1914. He attended Saint Peter’s Grammar School and Mission High School, where he graduated in 1932. Soon after, he married his wife, Geneva. They moved to the Bayview district near Candlestick Park. They had one son, William, who is a former employee of the Half Moon Bay, California Post Office.

Began In 1933

Carl began his career with the Post Office (then Department) in 1933 as a Special Delivery Messenger.

During that period, new postal workers were required to report for duty and wait in the swing room, off the clock, until called for available work. If work were available, he was paid a few cents for each special delivery letter he delivered. He later transferred to the Carrier craft.

Accomplishments

Carl became active in San Francisco

NALC Branch 214, in the early fifties. For the first couple of years, he was a Trustee and chairman of the barbeque committee.

In 1954, Carl was elected Branch President and served in that position until 1958. The 1958 National Convention of the NALC was held in San Francisco and, at this convention, then-National President, William C. Doherty, appointed Saxsenmeier to the newly formed NALC Health Benefits Plan Board of Directors.

In 1961, he became Western Field Director for the National Association of Letter Carriers. (Note this office today is known by the title of Region 1 National Business Agent which serves California, Nevada, Hawaii and Guam.) Carl J. Saxsenmeier served as Field Director until his death on January 19, 1966.

Testimonial dinner

Prior to his death, a testimonial dinner was given for Carl Saxsenmeier. Fifteen hundred people attended. The dinner was held at the Cabana Hotel in Palo Alto, Ca. The large attendance attested to the high regard the membership held for THE MAN.

Carl’s son, Bill, was at the testimonial and he quotes the featured speaker who honored his father by stating: “The only thing that Carl has above the average person is

his highly developed common sense and his love for other people. He is a common man, at home and in the presence of every man, and uses his abilities to the fullest.” To quote Bill Saxsenmeier directly: “This statement has stayed with me always and I feel it was the greatest thing anyone could say about another.”



Scholarship as memory

Carl J. Saxsenmeier was and is a symbol of exemplary leadership. We honor his memory by continuing the Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship Program. What better way to remember a fellow union member who gave his all for the betterment of Letter Carriers — past and present?

Beginnings in 1966

Not long after his death in 1966, the Scholarship program was born. Originally the program was administered by the National Union. It was then turned over to the trusteeship of Branch 214, San Francisco.

For a time, the program lay dormant. The California State Association of Letter Carriers saw the need to reactivate the

Continued on next page...

program in 1973. The State President at that time, Angelo Falco, appointed Jack J. Woods as Chairman with the responsibility of advertising, fund raising, and overseeing the awards of scholarships. The challenge was awesome. We had few funds and no one knew anything about the program.

We began in 1974 by awarding two five hundred dollar scholarships, expanding the awards to three in 1977, and increasing the award amount to six hundred fifty dollars in 1980.

Over the years, the Saxsenmeier Scholarship program has prospered and matured. In the 1993 period: two, two thousand dollar; two, fifteen hundred; and four, one thousand dollar scholarships were awarded.

Sponsorship to State Association

On October 2, 1974, when Branch 214 turned over the sponsorship of the Saxsenmeier program to the State Association, there was \$8,329.26 in the Fund.

During the first six years of the program, we had been able to award scholarships amounting to \$9,900.00 and still had the original fund amount. Donations were our only source of income. Three branches were faithful supporters: Branch 290,

Santa Barbara; Branch 1100, Anaheim; and Branch 70, San Diego. One union member, Rose Ann Laskie of Branch 1100, worked tirelessly in raising funds. During this "tin cup" period of the program, we could not expand due to a fickle financial base.

IT WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

Stable Funding

At the State Convention of May 1976 in Palo Alto, we found the means to provide the Scholarship program with a sound financial base.



Branch 290, Santa Barbara and Branch 5509, Goleta co-sponsored a resolution wherein the funds from the National Health Benefits rebate to the California State Association be deposited into the Carl J. Saxsenmeier Scholarship program to insure its future existence. The resolution was adopted. Today, twenty years later, we can be justly proud of our State Association sponsored union scholarship program.

Judging scholarship applicants

The judging of the applications is done by an independent panel of educators, who are experienced in scholarship competition. The Program's chairman, a state officer, collects the application and turns them over to these impartial experts.

Branch 290 has contributed to this worthy effort for twelve years, first with myself and then Mike Coyle, who chaired the program for four years.

Update 2015

Today we award ten \$1,400 scholarships each year to children and now grandchildren of NALC members. Even with historic low interest rates for the past decade your scholarship fund has continued to preserve its base and even grow slightly.

This accomplishment has been achieved by the many branches across the state whom donate to the fund each year.

Update 2020 Saxsenmeier Scholarship finalists. Congratulations to these young scholars!

Finalist -- Blanca Aparicio
NALC Member -- Jose Aparicio, NALC Branch 4430

Finalist -- Manreet Sodhi
NALC Member -- Sarbjit Singh Sodhi, NALC Branch 782

Finalist -- Joshua Candelaria
NALC Member -- Edgar Candelaria, NALC Branch 1100

Finalist -- Adrian Hoo
NALC Member -- May Lwin Lee, NALC Branch 24

Finalist -- Ricky Liu
NALC Member -- Jessie Kui Ruan, NALC Branch 1111

Finalist -- Haylee Hsieh
NALC Member -- Raymond Hsieh, NALC Branch 1100

Finalist -- Christina Zhang
NALC Member -- Simon Zhang, NALC Branch 213

Finalist -- Kay Kowalewski
NALC Member -- Phillip Kowalewski, NALC Branch 70

Finalist -- Joshua Chang
NALC Member -- Ghan Chang, NALC Branch 214

Finalist -- Christopher Bell
NALC Member -- David Bell, NALC Branch 183

Big thanks to CSALC President Harold Kelso and Mark Lesch, CSALC Secretary, for their help in compiling all of this CSALC info!!!

DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2020.

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 December 31, 2020.

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, 2021. (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, 2021.

Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate

ate 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 canceled.

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 am a senior in the 2020-21 school year.

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

letter carrier _____

of Branch No. 782 City Bakersfield State CA

My name is _____

My address is _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone No. _____

Signature of NALC parent member
(or spouse if deceased)

Last 4 digits of Social Security No. _____

Signature of branch officer

Printed name of branch officer

Title _____ Date _____

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2020, 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.

Most recent www.cdc.gov update:

*As of September 15, 2020, there have been 6,2537,627 Covid-19 cases identified in the United States and the U.S. territories. There have been 194,092 deaths — **twenty-two have been NALC members.** On April 16, there were 632,548 cases and 31, 071 deaths.*

Executive NALC VP Renfroe delivers regular updates on COVID-19 to you on the NALC's "You Are The Current Resident" Podcast. To listen on your smart phone, we recommend downloading the PodBean app. Then, more information can be heard @ [HTTPS://WWW.NALC.ORG/NEWS/NALC-AUDIO](https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-audio).

August 25, 2020 – Branch 2562 Letter Carrier passes away from coronavirus

56-year-old Letter Carrier Paulino Huerta III passed away Monday, August 24, from complications related to coronavirus. Brother Huerta worked at the Mercedes, TX Post Office. This November he would have celebrated his 20th anniversary with the Postal Service.

August 11, 2020 – Branch 373 member passes away from coronavirus

68-year-old retired Letter Carrier Melvin Stahmer, a member of Branch 373 in Iowa City, IA, recently passed away from complications related to COVID-19. Brother Stahmer began his 35-year career with the Postal Service in 1981. Prior to his retirement he worked in the Coralville Branch of the Iowa City Post Office.

Source: NALC Website "Latest News and Updates" <https://www.nalc.org/>

Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC? See the national NALC website. Also, stay in touch with your Branch 782 Officers if you have questions!

More Issues are addressed in President Rolando's August 31 message:

USPS unilateral implementation of programs which impact the work lives of Letter Carriers are being forcefully addressed by your leadership at the national level (Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation [ESAS]; Sorting Equipment Rationalization [SER]; Park Points; Article 34 Study; Consolidated Casing Initiative [CCI]; as well as the Collective Bargaining and Interest Arbitration).

However, here is the closing comment from President Rolando's message. It addresses one important current topic: **COVID-19 Cases**

"Just as the number of people throughout the country affected by the pandemic continue to rise, so do the number of postal employees being affected. Today, almost 5700 postal employees are under quarantine from the virus. Almost 44,000 previously quarantined postal employees have been cleared and returned to work. About 1800 of the currently quarantined postal employees have tested positive for the virus, and another 400 plus are presumed to be positive. Another 7600 postal employees who tested positive in the past have recovered and returned to work. Of all these numbers, about thirty percent are Letter Carriers. Sadly, 83 active postal employees have passed away from the virus, including 18 City Letter Carriers. We have been notified of four retired members who have passed away from the virus as well.

Thank you for all that you do. As you continue your heroic work serving the American public each day, please take every precaution regarding social distancing and face coverings. God bless each of you and your families, please stay safe.



NALC President Rolando

2020 NALC HBP Info

At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan
 *Hospital Pre-Certification
 Mental & Substance Precertification
 Prescription Drug Program
 CVS/Caremark Specialty Pharmacy
 Durable Medical Equipment
“24/7 Nurse Hotline”
 CVS/CareMark Pharmacist
 Solutions for Caregivers (24/7)
 CIGNA PPO Locator Line
 CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval
 Quit for Life (Tobacco Cessation)
 CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)
CIGNA Plus (Dental Discount)
 Disease Management Program
 OPM Retirement Info Center
 Federal Information Center
 Social Security Administration Info
 PostalEase Human Resources USPS
 Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)
 LabCorp Lab Services Bakersfield
Shared Services Option 5 live person
 Medicare
 Suicide Hotline
 Suicide?? Talk With Someone...

1-888-636-6252
 1-877-220-6252
 1-877-468-1016
 1-800-933-6252
 1-800-237-2767
 1-855-511-1893
1-877-220-6252
 1-888-636-6252
 1-877-468-1016
 1-877-220-6252
 1-800-668-9682
 1-866-784-8454
 1-800-558-9443
1-877-521-0244
 1-800-227-3728
 1-888-767-6738
 1-800-333-4636
 1-800-772-1213
 1-877-477-3273
 (661) 631-8520
 (661) 631-9258
1-877-477-3273
 1-800-633-4227
 1-800-784-2433
 1-800-273-8255

NALC Health Benefit Plan
 20547 Waverly Court
 Ashburn, Virginia 20149

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

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

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

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

** Call for approvals Organ Transplants,
 DME Surgeries InPatient*

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

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

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

URGENT CARE

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

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

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

MARK RAMIREZ

NALC Branch 782 Health Benefit Plan Representative

(661) 204-5592

“Out tHeRe”



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

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

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

The person behind the business card

Lori Stewart is the new Brookfield Uniform person who will be showing up at our units to provide you with access to quality union-made uniforms. She's one of our people.

Here's a little more info...

"I grew up in Simi Valley California and went to Simi Valley High School." She then attended college at California State University Northridge and was awarded a Bachelors Degree in Business Management/Marketing in 1984.

Hired as a Letter Carrier at the Moorpark Post Office in 1984, she retired after thirty five years of service in the same office. "When I started, we had three city routes and one rural route. When I retired there were 14 routes and 3 rural routes."

Lori became an NALC member 1984 and became involved in a number of activities. She was NALC Branch 2902 Chief Shop Steward as well as the Safety captain. Over the years, she participated in many California State Association of Letter Carriers (CSALC) training programs.

Prior to her retirement, she served as the NALC Food Drive coordinator for the Moorpark Post Office. "Because I am *passionate* about this great event, I am still the coordinator for the NALC Food Drive as a retired Letter Carrier. We donate the food we collect to the local food bank."

Through her involvement she has been both an NALC National convention delegate and also served in that capacity as a CSALC delegate on behalf of the members of Tri-Valley NALC Branch 2902. "I am still involved with my local union."

"I started working for Brookfield uniforms in



2019 as a sales person and I want to tell you a little about the company I work for."

Brookfield uniforms are union made. USA union distributors are members of Local 874 and manufacturing is done by workers in USA union factory Local Number 1129

Brookfield has been serving postal employees since 1956. Brookfield Uniforms gives both to the Letter Carriers Political Fund and to the NALC to support the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"I enjoy working for Brookfield uniforms and seeing all of my fellow co-workers. I have been married 26 years. My husband Don Is an aerospace mechanic. He enjoys sports and the outdoors. We love to travel and go on cruises.

Our daughter Jenna graduated from Wayne State in 2020 where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and health sciences with an emphasis in pharmacy.

She is Grad student attending Chapman University School of Pharmacy. She will be a pharmacist in 2022."



Since it has probably been years since a Brookfield Uniform Representative has been seen in local units, here's an idea of how it works:

Lori will set up "shop" and be available to Carriers when they return from the street. She will have samples of uniform items to purchase. Paperwork will be taken care of by Lori and she will be able to help Carriers. She will also make a record of the types of things which are ordered and the sizes. Should any issues arise, she will take care of them as soon as possible. Lori WILL work for YOU to be a properly attired Letter Carrier!!

Lori Stewart 805 368-0444

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City Carriers Assistants

Letter Carriers & MVS Drivers

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Option 1: 5 oz.* Slacks & Save \$66

Option 2: Shorts & Save \$63

Option 3: Culottes & Save \$78

Option 4: Skirts & Save \$63

Option 5: Shirt Jac & Cap Save \$55

Male or female shirt jac. Summer or winter cap or visor.

Option 6: \$45 Extra Bonus*

*** Go from \$464 to \$509**

Full Uniform Allowance Plans cannot combine with Seasonal Sales Specials

*Brookeze Slacks No. 114125 not included in Option 1

Brookfielduniforms.com / 800-527-0606

M-F 7am-6:00pm & Saturday 8am-1pm CDT

Fire Season +

By Roxanne Luce, Executive V.P.
NALC Branch 133

Fire season is unfortunately in full swing.

As of the writing of this article we have several offices being affected by wildfires in their areas: Grass Valley, Nevada City, Oroville, and Vacaville.

Branch President John McPherson has sent out e-mails to the Shop Stewards in the affected areas asking to be kept informed about our members who have been evacuated and/or have lost their homes.

If you are a retiree and are affected by wildfires and are evacuated or lose your home, please contact the branch at 916-348-0133.

We need to pass this information on to NALC at the National Level.

Each of you also needs to understand that NALC at the National Level has a NALC Disaster Relief Foundation which provides grants to our members who have been affected by natural disasters. This can be a lifeline to help recover.

It is important that you contact the Branch so we can get the necessary information to pass along to this foundation.

Courtesy of the North Highlands, CA September 2020 NALC Branch 133 Swing Room Gazette

Thousands of people have been impacted by fast moving fires in too many of the Western States.

The 2020 Hurricane Season is spreading havoc and misery in large swathes of the U.S.

Tropical Storm Isaias has dealt Puerto Rico another major weather event.

President's Report – Al Friedman, Branch 2008

COVID-19 causes major issues for post office

The sad news is we have now had three City Carriers die from the virus in Florida. The most recent one happened last week in Miami; a 41-year-old carrier passed away. The other two carriers died earlier this year, one from Sunrise and the other from Fort Lauderdale. We cannot let our guard down about using masks, hand sanitizers and distancing.

I will give you the latest numbers just in our Suncoast District. There are three districts in Florida, so these are just the Suncoast numbers up to July 30, 2020 for all postal employees:

- 313 total cases, 5 added just yesterday
- 299 confirmed cases
- 14 unconfirmed/under investigation
- 1,369 total employees quarantined since March
- 62 confirmed positive cases that have returned to work
- 470 employees still out on quarantine
- 87 required quarantine
- 383 were out on self-quarantine
- We have had 6 confirmed cases in our branch
- The month of July, we have been working with only 73% of all postal employees available due to the virus

These are just some of the issues we are dealing with trying to get the mail worked and delivered. Another reason is the new PMG trying to cut overtime in the middle of a pandemic, showing his lack of postal knowledge with the decisions he's made so far.

It's my personal opinion that it was the intent of the new PMG to shake the public's confidence in us before the election and begin the privatization plan to dismantle the post office.

For the past nine years in a row the USPS has been voted the most trusted government agency, whose sole purpose is to get the mail delivered on time. These new rules that have been mandated are in direct conflict with our contract.

We have filed more grievances in the last two weeks than in the past three months, which has put a tremendous amount of pressure on our stewards.

They need your help identifying violations. so if you see something, say something. Discouraging is not strong enough to describe working with more than 25% of the workforce missing and the daily pivoting of routes. working non-ODL people while ODL carriers sit home in the middle of summer in Florida.

To add insult to injury, management is increasing investigative interviews and discipline.

All of us, retired and active, have worked too hard to allow this to happen. We must now take the fight to Congress.

We are using Webex to have our next union meeting on August 25, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. Here is the number and password needed to dial into the meeting:

Meeting number (access code): 129 657 9580
Meeting password: DMhYMMQp863
You can also join by phone (408-418-9388).

This article is courtesy of the August 2020 issue of the Tarpon Springs, Florida Suncoast Letter Carrier's Update

As announced at the 2018 NALC Convention in Detroit, the union has established the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation to alleviate the suffering of members affected by natural disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires. The foundation was created to fill a need identified by many branches in the face of the disasters last year, including the wildfires that ravaged northern and southern California, as well as the hurricanes that swept through South Texas, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Florida Keys.



“Branches wanted to know where they could send desperately needed supplies and money, but there wasn’t a central location,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “That’s why we created this foundation, to reflect the will of the members and make it easy for them to help others in need quickly and efficiently.”

The foundation has been set up to function in two ways: by providing hands-on relief and by receiving donations as a means to offer financial grants. NALC is in the process of creating response teams throughout the country. People on the teams will receive disaster relief training from charitable organizations and government agencies, including the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Foundation volunteers recently were activated to go to North Carolina to help letter carriers recover from the destruction wrought by Hurricane Florence. They offered physical assistance—helping to remove water-logged furniture and tear out soaked drywall—as well as emotional assistance for individuals who had been overwhelmed by the aftermath. Additionally, basic supplies, including uniforms and food, will be available for those who need them in the future.

The foundation also will provide financial support through grants. Any NALC member who has faced hardship as a result of a natural disaster will be able to apply for assistance. The foundation’s board of directors will consider the hardship applications and will issue grants on an objective basis to eligible individuals as funds are available. Job performance or history of donations to the foundation will not be considered as part of the selection process.

The foundation is a 501(c)(3). Your contribution to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation may be eligible for a tax deduction. It is recommended you seek further advice from your tax advisor. Anyone who would like to make a donation may send a check or money order to the address below. The union is working on accepting donations through credit cards and electronic funds transfer (EFT) online. It is anticipated that financial support for the foundation will be provided by NALC, branch fundraising events, donations from members and donations from corporate sponsors. *Any member wishing to be a potential Disaster Relief Foundation volunteer should send a note about his or her interest to 100 Indiana Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144.*

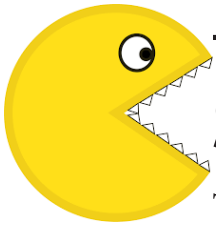
Source: <https://www.nalc.org/community-service/nalc-disaster-relief-foundation-2/overview>

“The generosity of Letter Carriers never ceases to amaze me. We hope that the Foundation will become an invaluable lifeline for our sisters and brothers in need, in the true spirit of solidarity. A donation to this foundation eases the suffering of your fellow members when disaster strikes, and 100 percent of NALC Branch and members donations will be used to provide supplies and award grants to NALC members.”

Fredric V. Rolando, NALC President

Disaster Preparation Guide

<https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/body/NALCDRF-Members-Guide-1.pdf>



Something to Chew On

By Gabriel Buentello, Shop Steward
NALC Branch 231

These certainly are strange times to be living in. To go into a store or any other building we must wear a mask (which for homely looking guys like myself is an advantage) and we must stay six feet away from people.

We have had to cut our own hair or have clandestine meetings with a stylist in a house instead of a salon for some of you rebels. And now we begin the school year with home learning. I cannot imagine how that will go with small children whose attention spans can be measured in seconds.

Although those of us with teenagers have different sets of problems. My sixteen-year-old daughter mockingly asked if I was going to be her tutor at home. She does math problems with ten letters for every one number so unless she needs a joke or crude reference she knows I am useless to her school-wise (I still love you despite the teasing Mak).

At the start of this pandemic we saw the worst in people. I thought of the Joker scene in *The Dark Knight* where he tells Batman, "When the chips are down these, uh, civilized people? They'll eat each other. See I'm not a monster, I'm just ahead of the curve." I saw people fighting over toilet paper of all things.

I went out to Costco early in this and didn't go back for a few months. When I finally get good and mad bad things can happen. I'm too old for that kind of nonsense now so I was patient and let the madness pass. I was disgusted when stores had to institute hours for the elderly and the handicapped. What kind of society have we become when we are willing to trample over the most helpless of our citizens? I can't stand when people don't put their shopping carts in the corral, I couldn't imagine what I would do if I witnessed that kind of thing.

Working for the USPS we have been presented a different set of problems. We have been deemed essential workers. Some took that on with a sense

of pride and understanding that the show must go on. Others were worried and scared what we might encounter in this unprecedented time and rightfully so. As a steward I tried my best to calm the waters and stay upbeat. Thanks to HIPAA we are not allowed to be told if anyone has COVID-19, so paranoia is high at all times. All we have are rumors and innuendo, so we don't know if we are taking something home with us.

Thankfully, our custodian Rick has been on top of everything and disinfected our vehicles as well as the station. Big shout out to him for taking on the extra work without complaint.

For the younger carriers, I tried to explain to them what it was like delivering during 9/11 and the anthrax attacks after. This is something different though. I use the word unprecedented a lot because I have never seen the amount of parcels and spurs we are delivering in these conditions. And with COVID leave we have had to do it with less carriers. My July was spent doing 12 hours a day but I felt lucky because it was only one month. Other stations have been doing that for a lot longer.

"It felt unnatural in my postal genes to leave mail on the floor and case it later. We also left entire routes undone. At one point I was delivering three sets of DPS on a route because only the parcels went out the previous days."

And in the middle of all this turmoil we get a new Postmaster General with a lot of different ideas. I'm not going to get into the political side of it, but someone with less experience than me trying to tell me my job getting put in charge doesn't surprise me in the least. I've gotten used to it.

Introducing a new set of orders when we are barely keeping our heads above water doesn't seem kosher or smart either. The pilot program our station was picked for had some unique ideas, but without the carriers or

clerks to pull it off it was a tough haul. Nonetheless, we did it for a few weeks. It felt unnatural in my postal genes to leave mail on the floor and case it later. We also left entire routes undone. At one point I was delivering three sets of DPS on a route because only the parcels went out the previous days. It reminded me when I first started with all the third class on the floor with the different colored tags on them. But we NEVER left first class on the floor. Thankfully congress gave the new PMG a close up so we are back to business as usual, hopefully.

Right now I'm in the middle of a two-week sabbatical. I have witnessed up close the fires in my home county of Monterey. It's the perfect cap to this entirely messed up year that such a beautiful place is now going to be scarred for a long while. I lived there twenty-eight years but never appreciated it like I do now.

Hopefully that and the USPS will heal from this time and come out better than it was before. Hopefully next time something like this happens we will be more prepared and be more considerate of each other. But knowing human nature, I won't hold my breath. The protests and riots are proof that we have a long way to go as a society.

So, until then I'll just be a simple mailman doing my job as best I can with my limited abilities (I got that from a carrier long since retired). Be careful out there carriers and remember you are essential right now. Take some pride in that - and your jobs.

This article is courtesy of the September 2020 Fresno, California NALC Branch 231 *POSTMAN'S VIEW*. Thank you, Gabriel! And, — one more time — Thank You, Editor Gary Bottoms, it was really great fun to steal from your effort and work!!

Who Took This Job to Work for Free??

By Matt Leger, NALC Branch 51 Executive V.P.

Hopefully I have grabbed your attention with that headline.

If it seems that I have written this article before, it's because I have. Unfortunately, we continue to have the somewhat more than occasional problems where someone's pay is not correct.

While I believe most of what happens locally are innocent mistakes and not criminal acts, it is still *extremely* upsetting to me when a Carrier is not paid correctly regardless of the motive. There have been several instances across the country where the issues have been criminal, in my opinion.

I have ALWAYS encouraged everyone to keep a daily log of their hours, especially those who work a less than standard schedule, particularly CCA's and OTDL's.

Aside from the typical issues, what seems to be the most recent problems involve proper leave being input. Carriers who are on Sick Leave being charged Annual Leave, or CCA's being charged LWOP.

Management locally cannot seem to come up with any kind of system keeping track of what leave we are using, and at times just seem to flip a coin, for sick or annual leave. Please make sure you fill out and maintain a copy of any

3971 you submit, and don't just accept it when they screw up. See one of us and we will fix it.

Annual Leave is precious and should not be taken away improperly. While you have often heard "obey now and grieve later", do so, but if something doesn't pass the smell test reach out to us immediately.

If someone tells you not to swipe into the office (after 7 perhaps?) or tells you not to punch out that they'll "take care of it". Red flags should immediately go up and you should watch your wallet!

They may be supervisors and in positions of authority but that does not mean that they always have YOUR best interests at heart.

Because of rampant abuse nationwide the Postal Service recently developed an app on LiteBlue called "Virtual Timecard"

This app updates every 5 minutes with your actual clock rings. Watch it daily at the end of your shift, make sure it is correct. Make sure any leave you used is properly coded. It doesn't matter if you are a CCA with 5 days in or a 30-year carrier, everyone needs to pay attention, and don't be afraid to speak up.

Stay Safe, Stay Vigilant, Stay Healthy

This article is courtesy of the September 2020 Fall River, Massachusetts NALC Branch 51 *COURIER*. I really appreciate the helping hand from Editor Tanya Manchester!

**IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS.
IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, YOU HAVE NONE...**

It's Your Choice

By Judy Kersten, NALC Branch 3 Insurance Representative



Despite how management claims or thinks, accidents do happen. A carrier's environment is not within their total control. Even the safest person can have an accident. The EL-505 Injury Compensation manual is guide by which work related injuries should be handled in the Post Office. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Even a seemingly small error, can create problems for having a worker's compensation claim being accepted.

EL-505 defines a medical emergency as:

A medical emergency is an injury or sudden and unexpected onset of a condition requiring immediate medical care. Some problems are considered emergencies because, if not treated promptly, they might become more serious (for example, animal bites, eye injuries, deep cuts, broken bones). Others are emergencies because they are potentially life-threatening (for example, heart attacks, strokes, weapon wounds, sudden inability to breathe). In the event that there is a doubt as to the emergent nature of the emergency, it should be handled as an emergency (ELM 543.14).

If you sustain an injury or have a medical emergency, do not "work" through it. You should contact management immediately. Management should be asking if you need medical attention and NOT can you continue working. Get medical attention because neither the supervisor nor you are a physician. Working through the pain is not the answer either. Waiting to get medical attention does no one any good and only raises questions about the seriousness of your injury. Filing a claim timely and getting medically treated protects your health and rights.

L-505 states in part:

Immediately ensure that appropriate medical care is provided:

- Advise the employee of his or her right to treatment by a USPS contract medical provider or by a private physician or hospital of his or her choice.
- Arrange for the employee to go to the nearest available physician or hospital or to a physician or hospital chosen by the employee or by the employee's representative.
- **In emergency situations, you must accompany the employee to the doctor's office or hospital, or arrange for another supervisor to do so, to ensure that the employee receives prompt medical treatment.**

Too often management instructs the carrier to go to the local ambulatory medical center. There are several in the

region by different names. Management **does not** advise you of your right to be seen by the **medical professional of your choice**. Most of these facilities do not have a **Physician on duty**. Remember, medical reports need to be signed or counter-signed by a Doctor to have any probative value for your claim. This is a Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) requirement. Many claims are denied simply because the medical reports submitted are signed by a physician assistant (PA) or nurse practitioner (NP). Getting reports signed by a Doctor later is often difficult.

Get the medical care you need from the start. Though you may need to remind management of your right to choose your own physician or hospital, it is to your health and benefit that you do so.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

Members call the Union office seeking assistance on various items. There is no one out-standing item. However, there is one on going theme....it is failure to have documentation.

In this age of technology, we have drifted away from retaining documents. Keeping anything in paper form is considered obsolete. I understand that having a 'mound' of papers is not ideal. However, all members should know to prioritize what documents are necessary against what is disposable.

No one argues that birth certificates, marriage licenses, property deeds and auto titles are necessary. But what about military DD-214, retirement papers (book) and an injury compensation claim or health insurance information? You would be surprised how many members do not know what health insurance provider they have or 'lost' their insurance card. It only becomes a priority when they need health care, mostly emergent.

While we are still under COVID-19 guidelines with many travel and event restrictions in force, take some of this time to review your documents. Assess what you have against what is missing and truly need. Arrange your documents and store in a safe place. You never know when you may need that document to provide for a benefit or issue that may arise.

Remember, these documents contain important information for you. The information can make anyone assisting you with an issue easier and it need not be a mound of paper.

Article courtesy of the August 2020 Buffalo, New York NALC Branch 3 BUZZ. Thanks for the help, Editor Justin Mongiolo!

*%#! Mail Delays

By Beki Serwach, NALC Branch 4374 V.P.

I am angry and frustrated, along with all of my coworkers and most likely the vast majority of my fellow Letter Carriers across the nation at the amount of mail going unworked, unsorted to Carrier routes, and undelivered to our customers. Understandably, USPS is deeply affected by the number of employees not at work due to Coronavirus. However, many of the issues we're facing at work already existed and are now compounded by the initiatives rolled out by our new PMG.

Who exactly is DeJoy? According to Wikipedia, "Louis DeJoy is an American businessman and Republican Party fundraiser who was appointed in May 2020 by unanimous selection of the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service to serve as the 75th United States Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer of the world's largest postal organization".

Then on June 15, 2020 Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) inquired with the USPS board of governors asking if PMG DeJoy, was "selected for reasons of politics or patronage". PMG DeJoy is best known for being a top fundraiser for President Trump and finance chair for the Republican National Convention from which he has since resigned.

Also, the *Washington Post* reported "**DeJoy and his wife, Aldona Wos — the ambassador-nominee to Canada — have between \$30.1 million and \$75.3 million in assets in USPS competitors or contractors, according to Wos's financial disclosure paperwork filed with the Office of Government Ethics.** Postal Service mail processing contractor XPO Logistics — which acquired DeJoy's company New Breed Logistics in 2014 — represents the vast majority of those holdings. Their combined stake in competitors UPS and trucking company J.B. Hunt is roughly \$265,000."

Would anyone like to know how long their parcels have been sitting in St Clair Shores waiting to be sorted to carrier routes? Over a week now! Does anyone at USPS seem to care? Sadly, no.

President Trump openly vows to privatize the USPS. How will PMG DeJoy distance himself from the GOP and his vast financial portfolio remains to be seen.

What can be seen and is evident in recent "Great Lakes" and "ESAS" Initiatives is that First Class Mail no longer has any value to USPS.

The main and almost singular focus is on parcel delivery even if it means falsifying scans in order to stop the clock. Just ask anyone who works at the Customer Care Center how long the wait times are in the queue. Customers wait upwards of 45 minutes, an hour and a half or more to talk to an agent. We have over 1500 agents!

Why is that important?

Because Letter Carriers don't have time to answer every customer who hasn't had mail delivery for several days. Even if they did, what can they say that would be professional while also being the truth?

The truth is not professional, the truth is ugly, unacceptable, and frankly, it's criminal.

Letter Carriers are faced with having to lie to their customers when asked what is going on because there's no nice way to explain this and the ELM requires employees to act in a manner that reflects favorably on the USPS on and off the job.

Yet, we're watching First Class mail take a back seat to parcels, as well as sitting in customers mailboxes for outgoing collection for days at a time due to non-delivery.

This is especially disturbing during the political season. Absentee Ballots along with Voter Ballots went undelivered by August 4th, Political Mail was still being sorted and was in our DPS on August 5th.

Letter Carriers want to know what our union is doing about all of this. Should we just keep saying we're focused on passing a stimulus package? One that no longer includes anything for the USPS. Why aren't we calling for informational pickets, how about commercials or radio spots, how about television spots, something to tell the American people the truth.

Let's tell America that Letter Carriers care enough about our customers that we're willing to fight for the future of the USPS, and it starts by delivering the mail timely and accurately, it should also include reporting the astounding amount of delayed mail and packages that USPS tries to hide.

THAT'S why we are the most trusted Government Agency, because Letter Carriers go above and beyond every single day. Have you read recent comments on social media? We cannot let Letter Carriers be judged by the wrongdoings of the USPS. We have to tell the truth!

Of course, we're filing the necessary grievances for the violations taking place in our stations. That's little comfort to our customers and our Letter Carriers know full well that a grievance takes time and likely will do very little until initiatives like ESAS Pilot Programs come to an end.

If we're honest about it, those measures have never stopped the violations. Maybe for a minute, but not on a permanent or lasting basis.

We're already seeing Letter Carriers reach the breaking point in many of our stations with the extreme OT on top of COVID and a reduced workforce.

Most of our current workforce isn't used to being forced to 12 hours on a daily basis. Start times being backed up to 09.00 - 09.25 leaves very little family time for them and makes finding childcare even more difficult.

Obviously, I know I'm preaching to the choir right now, but I feel like Letter Carriers are the sacrificial lambs in a sea of lies and deceit. It always comes down to the Letter Carrier to shoulder the brunt of USPS burdens.

Somebody's gotta care enough to show a true picture of what is really going on out here in the stations.

I filled out my postal pulse survey today and it's undoubtedly the worst I've ever felt about the USPS.

Enough is enough.

Brothers and Sisters, we must unite in this fight.

This article is courtesy of the August 2020 issue of the Center Line, Michigan NALC Branch 4374
FRONT LINES

A Message From NARFE President Ken Thomas

I issued a statement expressing my concern with the Trump administration's plan to implement a deferred payroll tax policy for federal employees. As you are aware, the policy would apply to **ALL** federal employees and military personnel making less than \$104,000 per year (\$4,000 per biweekly pay period).

In August, President Donald Trump issued a Presidential Memorandum deferring payroll taxes on wages paid from September 1 through December 31, 2020.

UNLESS ACTION IS TAKEN BY CONGRESS TO FORGIVE THE DEBT, the deferral is a short-term loan that may be confusing for workers **WHO WILL RECEIVE A LARGER THAN EXPECTED TAX BILL IN 2021**.

Per IRS guidance, federal workers may be faced **WITH INTEREST PAYMENTS ON DEFERRED TAXES** and potentially be penalized with **SMALLER** annuity payments upon retirement IF THEY FAIL TO REPAY THE TAXES ON TIME.

Therefore, I urge federal workers to save the extra income they receive in their paychecks this year for next year's taxes!

The deferral applies to any employee whose biweekly pre-tax wages or compensation is less than \$4,000 and whose company implements the deferral. While **MOST PRIVATE-SECTOR BUSINESSES ARE NOT DEFERRING THE TAXES ON BEHALF OF THEIR EMPLOYEES**; in the case of the federal government, the "company" with authority is the President.

NARFE National President Ken Thomas issued a statement raising concerns about the tax deferral and how it could affect federal employees. Thomas warned that the deferral is **NOT an increase in take-home pay but simply a short-term loan that will need to be repaid in full**.

To avoid future financial problems, he urged federal employees to **SAVE THE EXTRA INCOME THEY RECEIVE IN THEIR PAYCHECKS FOR NEXT YEAR'S TAXES**.

According to *Federal News Network*, an email from the Defense Contracting Management Agency informed employees that there is **NO opt-out or opt-in option** for the deferral. Furthermore, the memo directs the Secretary of the Treasury to explore avenues – including legislation – to eliminate the obligation to pay the deferred taxes; **BUT, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT IT WILL HAPPEN**.

CONGRESS HAS NOT supported the deferral policy, and there has been **NO** indication that it will accede to the administration's request to approve legislation to forgive the tax deferral in the future.

This information was sourced from NARFE National Headquarters <communications@narfe.org> by way of Joanne Rowles NARFE Chapter 68 President

As the only organization solely dedicated to the general welfare of all federal workers and retirees, NARFE delivers valuable guidance, timely resources and powerful advocacy. For nearly a century, NARFE has been a trusted source of knowledge for the federal community, Capitol Hill, the executive branch and the media.

Since NARFE's founding in 1921, the association's mission has been to defend and advance the earned pay and benefits of America's civil servants. Today, NARFE's team of professional lobbyists continues to work tirelessly on behalf of the federal community. Supported by grassroots activists, NARFE is a leading voice in Washington and across the country.

Federal benefits and retirement plans are unique, complex and subject to change. NARFE provides both federal workers and retirees with the clear, reliable and accessible counsel they need to make critical decisions and gain confidence in a secure future. NARFE webinars, training conferences, magazine, online benefit resource library, and individual counseling services all offer in-depth expertise on key issues.



**National Active and Retired
Federal Employees Association**

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires the Federal government to provide all of its employees with paid sick leave and, for employees who are covered under Title I of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), with expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

▶ PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Generally, the Federal government must provide Federal employees:

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total; and
- 75% for qualifying reasons #4 and 5 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total.

Federal employees including those not covered under Title I of the FMLA can receive either 75% of the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage for the two-week period for qualifying reason #5 below. However, for leave under qualifying reason #5, Federal employees covered under Title I of the FMLA can receive 10 additional weeks of expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below, up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

▶ ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

All Federal employees are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). Federal employees who are covered under Title I of the FMLA and have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request are eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.

Most federal employees are not covered under Title I of the FMLA and so would not be eligible for partially paid expanded family and medical leave. Please consult with your agency to determine whether you are covered under Title I of the FMLA. The Office of Personnel and Management will issue guidance on this question.

Be Advised that as of September 01, 2020:

Families First Coronavirus Response Act Impact on Retirement and Thrift Savings Plan

The NALC has received notification from the Postal Service that leave taken under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act is not eligible for retirement and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) deductions. This is in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management which oversees both benefits.

Those that have taken leave under the FFCRA will be issued refunds by the Postal Service for any retirement and TSP contributions which will be reflected on your October 2, 2020 paycheck.

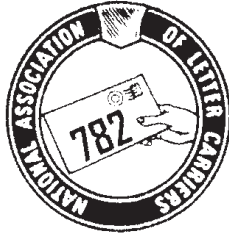
Leave used under the FFCRA (Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act Expansion) will not impact creditable service time towards retirement eligibility. This leave does not impact the High-3 Average Salary calculation used for an annuity computation. The annuity calculation for full-time career employees will not be impacted.

However, use of FFCRA leave for part-time career employees will have an impact on annuity calculations. Annuities with a part-time career component are prorated based on the hours worked when compared to a full-time position. Leave taken under FFCRA is not considered basic pay and is treated similarly to periods of Leave Without Pay (LWOP), which does not increase the total hours worked for the part-time component calculation. NALC members may contact the NALC retirement department with questions regarding part-time career service.

Carriers that wish to, may change their election of FFCRA leave to a different type of leave (such as sick or annual) to keep their retirement and TSP contributions. To avoid a refund, all requests must be entered in AdjustPay before September 11, 2020.

All TSP eligible employees may change their TSP election at any time during the year. The FFCRA will expire December 31st, 2020, and any unused leave will be forfeited.

This information was sourced from the NALC website.



from the editor-guy

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

You may have questions about how this book can be used or whether or not it will be a good investment. You can call me at the phone number listed below. You can write to me, or you can e-mail me at BRZIII@AOLCOM. I would be glad to answer your questions or give you an idea of how this product can be a creative tool for your current or future NALC editor in presenting information to NALC members. *(Please follow this trail ***)*

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

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

BASIL ZUNIGA

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

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

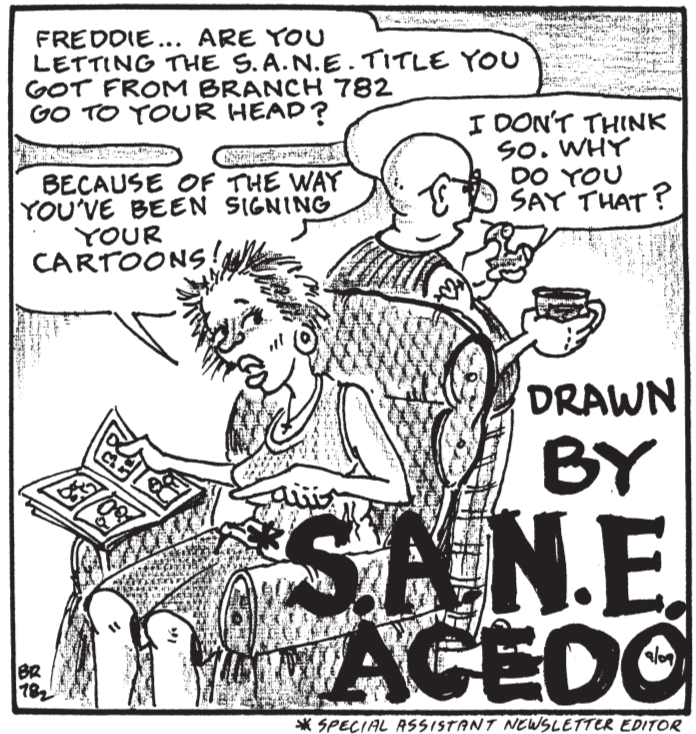
● *** SPECIAL OFFER: I will include a copy of **Out tHeRe** with this order. **500 more cartoons!** ●

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

● Please make check payable to Basil Zuniga, Branch 782 Editor-guy ●

Please include \$7.90 for USPS Priority Mail postage.

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

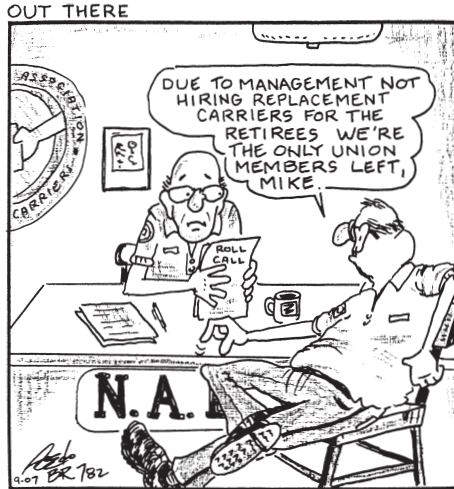


Curious about what you might be getting? Check out the sample featured on the following page.

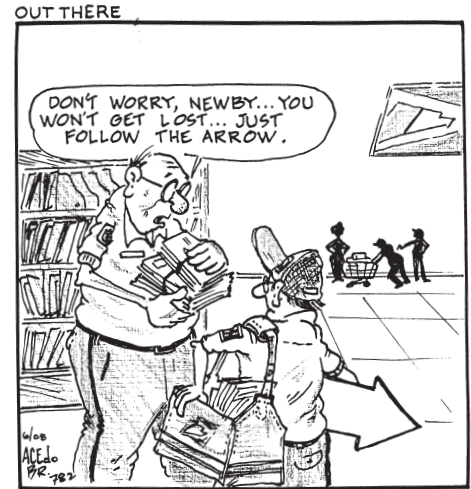
This is a sample. You are looking at page 74 in the *NALC Editor Resource Book*. There are 176 pages in this book that explore glimpses into our lives as Letter Carriers from January 2003 to July 2016...



Originally published April 2009



Originally published April 2009



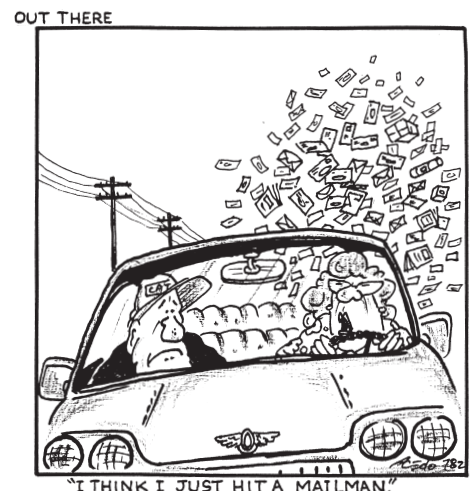
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OUT THERE



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



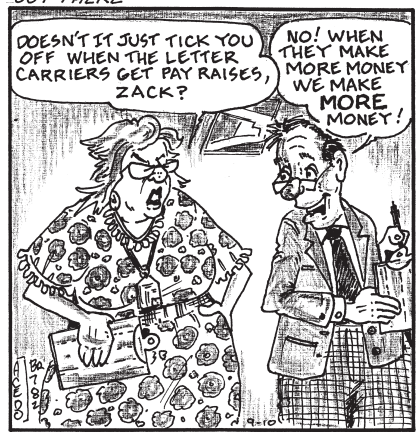
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OUT THERE



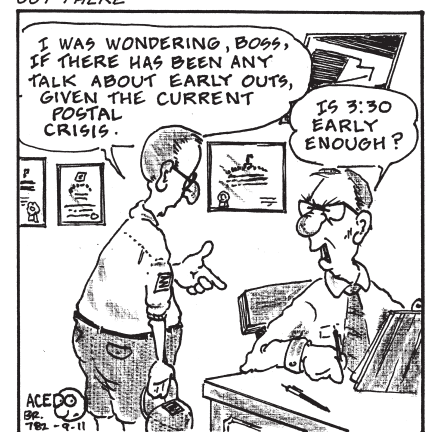
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OUT THERE



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



OUT THERE

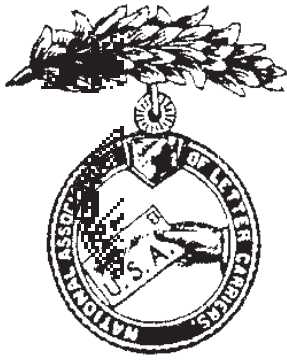


* S.A.N.E.



I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO WITH THIS OH WELL! WIN SOME LOSE SOME





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

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

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

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

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

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
(C) (661) 205-1603
e-mail: brzii@aol.com

Paul Greenfield, Assistant Editor
(C) (661) 203-7802

The "S.A.N.E."*
Fred Acedo, Cartoonist
*(Special Assistant Newsletter Editor)
P.O. Box 6532
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532
e-mail: outthere5150@yahoo.com

Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer
Dholderman@bak.rr.com

NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

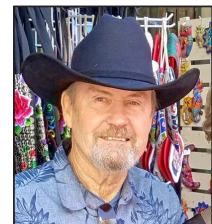
Arvin (93203)	Vacant	(661) 331-9171
Avenal (93204)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
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OWCP Representative	Rick Gerdes	(661) 301-9675
USPS Social Recreation Rep.	Paul Greenfield	(661) 203-7802

* Denotes Post Office Phone Number

**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) 331-9171

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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

DUE TO THE CONTINUING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND FOR THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF ACTIVE AND RETIRED LETTER CARRIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES, IT IS NECESSARY TO CANCEL THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Latest Covid-19 updates from the NALC? See the national NALC website. Also, stay in touch with your Branch 782 Officers if you have questions!

"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



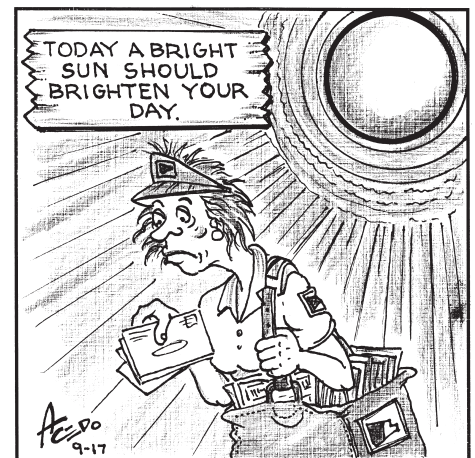
"Out there"



"Out there"



"Out there"



Print newsletter featured twelve pages. YOUR web version showcases thirty-two pages...