

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

# E.A. Baker Union Update



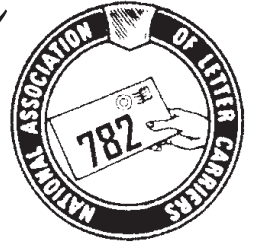
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LAMONT  
SHAFTER  
WASCO

**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901**



NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 2014

at the



# Mike:

Let me start off  
by wishing Alex  
Dang the very  
best in his new  
career: Retiree!  
When he started  
48 years ago,  
who knew?

Everyone's career has to start somewhere. In today's USPS, that entry level position is time spent as a City Carrier Assistant (CCA).

I want to feature something written by a former CCA who describes what her world was like during her relatively short career. (In context, think about how amazing it is that Alex Dang stuck it out through all of the ups and downs that he had to experience in all of those days carrying mail!)

MIKE TOWERY

## Blues on Wheels

by Jess Stoner

A writer becomes a carrier for the United States Postal Service out of a long-held love for the mail.

What she discovers are screams, threats, lies, labor violations, and dog attacks.

After taking a personality test online and another exam consisting mostly of questions evaluating the sharpness of my memory, I was granted a five-minute interview and hired as a city carrier assistant (CCA) for the United States Postal Service.

The CCA position, akin to a contract letter-carrier, was created in 2013 to save the USPS money and shift higher-paid transitional employees (TEs) into lower-paying jobs. Or, as one district supervisor screamed at me: "YOU EXIST TO REDUCE OVERTIME."

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## OUT THERE



TEs, who were making over \$20 an hour—with no benefits, no retirement, and no path to becoming a “regular”—had a short window to either take a \$5 per hour pay cut and become a CCA...with the promise of making Regular in the vaguely defined near future, or quit.

I was hired at \$15.30 an hour, a winning wage considering the president of a local branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers union revealed that without the collective bargaining process, the USPS would be paying us \$10 an hour.

During our 40 hours of in-classroom training, which included a well-taught defensive driving course, we learned that leaves are as slick as ice, no one goes “postal” anymore (they go, as my trainer said, “‘high school,’ like Columbine” instead), and, although, this was Texas, we had to “leave the Glock at home.”

We were also told that we should never ask for a day off. Our trainer

his wife and young child had been in a car accident and were taken by ambulance to the hospital. His supervisor told him he could visit them, but he had to return to deliver the mail. He had already worked more than 14 days in a row.

Once you leave the classroom, you head to the station you’re assigned to for three days of shadowing. My first day on the job, I clocked in at the beginning of my shift and was immediately reprimanded by my supervisor, who told me, “You don’t clock in until I tell you to clock in.” But the shadowing went well; I worked with two regular carriers I quickly adored, who showed me the ropes, including which convenience stores would let you use their bathroom. And then I was on my own.

It’s hard to articulate what it’s like, the first time you’re behind the wheel of your Long Life Vehicle (LLV), the mail truck you’re still nervous to drive, when you haven’t yet developed

bragged that he had shown up for work when he was sick as a dog, and it wasn’t until he had thrown up on his supervisor’s shoes that he was forcibly sent home. Another CCA-in-training, a veteran of Afghanistan I sat next to for a few days, would quit a few months in;

a system to remember where the 50 packages you loaded into the truck need to be delivered; when you don’t really know where you’re going, and your boss tells you to use the map on your phone, and even then you have no idea where to park to deliver each “loop” of mail.

My first day alone on the streets, a little girl and her littler brother met me at their fence. She told me it was her fifth birthday and then asked me if I had a brother. I said I did. She asked me if I had a mom, and I said I did. Then she told me that her mom had died. I handed the little girl her mail, asked if she could help me by taking it to the house, and then cried as I walked through her lawn to the next house.

It was an emotional, slow-going, and still exhilarating first day, until my phone rang, and my boss screamed, “WHY AREN’T YOU BACK AT THE STATION!” I tried to rush, got clumsy, slowed down even more, and then a miracle happened: Another carrier, already on her way home and off the clock, stopped to help me with the last apartments on my route.

I cried once more, a few weeks in. The mail was heavy, and I was covering a route with a number of apartments whose mailboxes were old, often wouldn’t budge, and even when they did, residents so rarely checked their mail that I had to painstakingly fold and squish letters to fit them in. Then I dropped my scanner and it broke.

I called the station to tell them I was running late. My supervisor screamed, “YOU’RE HORRIBLE,” and I said, “I’m doing my best,” and I meant it. When an assistant supervisor showed up to help 20 minutes later, the strap on my satchel also broke. I thanked the supervisor for her help, although even she couldn’t get the mailbox closed, and turned away so she couldn’t see my face.

I drove to my next loop and sobbed aloud as I tried to shove thick magazines through thin, razor-sharp mail slots that made my fingers bleed. I kept crying, from exhaustion and frustration, as I walked through hedges and tree branches. When I finished and arrived at the station, my supervisor asked if I had been crying. I told her my allergies were terrible.

Another carrier had already told me to never, ever show them what they do to you.

I wanted to be a letter carrier because I have always loved checking the mail. It has been one of the highlights of my day since I was a kid, when my favorite aunt, who lived more than 1,000 miles away, would send me letters and packages. I had also been underemployed, temping and volunteering for the last six months. I wanted to work outside, to tire out my body and my mind. I wanted a paycheck.

Everyone I knew was happy for me when I was hired; many said that delivering the mail was their secret dream job. They told me about the letter carriers they grew up with, whose names they knew.

I was so excited during training, I took notes as if I was in graduate school and didn't sleep the night before my LLV driver exam.

I joined the NALC, even though Texas is a Right to Work state, and I didn't have to join the union, because they were supposed to defend me even if I didn't pay dues.

I wanted to be good at my job, to do more than not screw up. I wanted to be the best, even before I knew that the history of the Post Office parallels the history of America, in all its glorious achievements and shameful transgressions.

Before the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, it named Benjamin Franklin the not-yet-a-country's first postmaster, though his job at that point was mostly to ensure that General George Washington and others would have a dependable system to deliver military intelligence.

In 1788, the Constitution was finally ratified, and within its Article 1 is the establishment of the Post Office. A few years later, in 1792, Congress passed the Postal Act, which declared the "sanctity" of the mail, a kind of throwback middle finger to the English, who would spy on the colonists by opening their letters.

During the Civil War, free delivery arrived in cities—you used to have to pay to receive a letter, not send it—and by the close of the century, a letter could make a 1,000-mile journey by horse, steamboat, or rail.

The 20th century saw mail by plane (Charles Lindbergh was an early air-mail pilot) and public contempt for the postal worker by congresses, presidents, and postmasters general. President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Gag Order in 1902, which prevented postal workers from advocating for themselves, including the railroad clerks who were dying by the dozens in dangerous working conditions.

Though the order was finally lifted a decade

later, postal employees' wages and benefits were still at the whim of Congress until 1970, when 200,000 postal workers went on strike and postal unions earned collective bargaining rights.

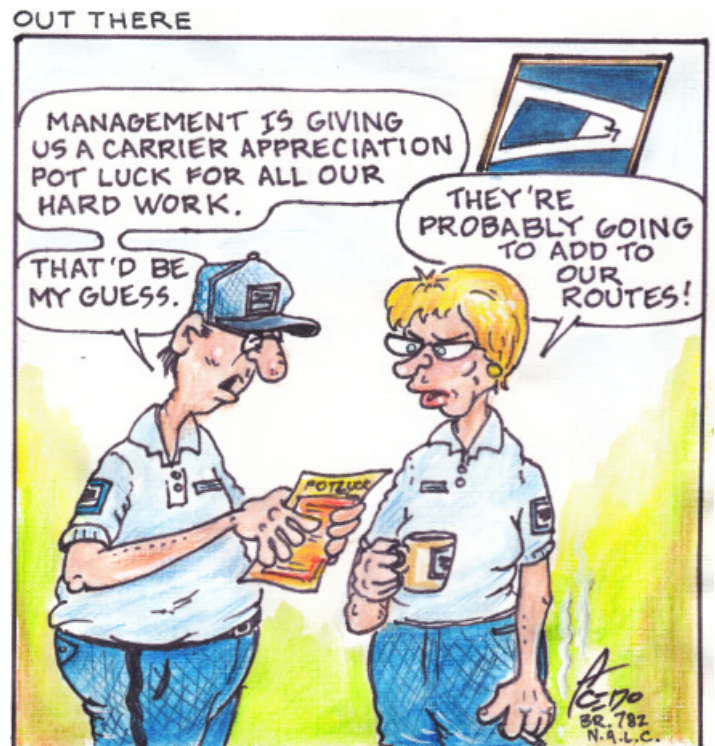
Which would be a fine end to the story, except the contempt continues.

In 2006, Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act, which pillaged the USPS, forcing it to pre-fund 75 years of employee health benefits, an annual \$5 billion payment that no other federal agency is required to provide.

In my short three months on the job, I developed a strength I hated: staying silent.

I'm a Type-A person who grew up as a member of the lower middle class; I've always been driven to work hard, no matter where I was employed: the warehouses, convenience stores and restaurants before and

*Continued on next page...*



during college, and after graduating, the nonprofits, the universities where I taught.

But something inside me changed after working at the Post Office. I didn't run between houses to deliver the mail as fast as I could to prove I could do it and do it well. (I shouldn't have, anyway; so many of your lawns have hidden holes and sprinkler heads, I bit it, hard, numerous times.) I ran because I didn't want to be screamed at.

The only proof that I had done well was if, when my boss called toward the end of the day, screaming "WHERE ARE YOU?" I could say, "On my way back to the station."

In my short three months on the job, I developed a strength I hated: staying silent. I did not contradict my supervisor when she told my co-workers and union steward that I smoked in my vehicle (I never did); I kept quiet when she screamed at a clerk standing next to me that CCAs shouldn't be allowed to complain

about her to the union (I never did, but it was my right to do so); I raged quietly when an assistant supervisor told my fellow carriers that I said I had finished earlier than they did because they went out to lunch (I said no such thing).

The veteran carriers told me they were used to it, to ignore it and just say, "Yes, ma'am." A mentor of sorts, a union steward for four decades in West Texas, told me, "Until your supervisor writes you up, she's got nothing on you." Those were his words of encouragement, along with, "If you're new, have a good attitude, and are friendly with the regulars, they hate that."

I lost 17 pounds during my first six weeks delivering the mail. At my station, each route, as long as 12 miles, was configured to take around six hours, which was supposed to include two 10-minute paid breaks and an unpaid 30-minute lunch, which comes out of your paycheck whether you take it or not.

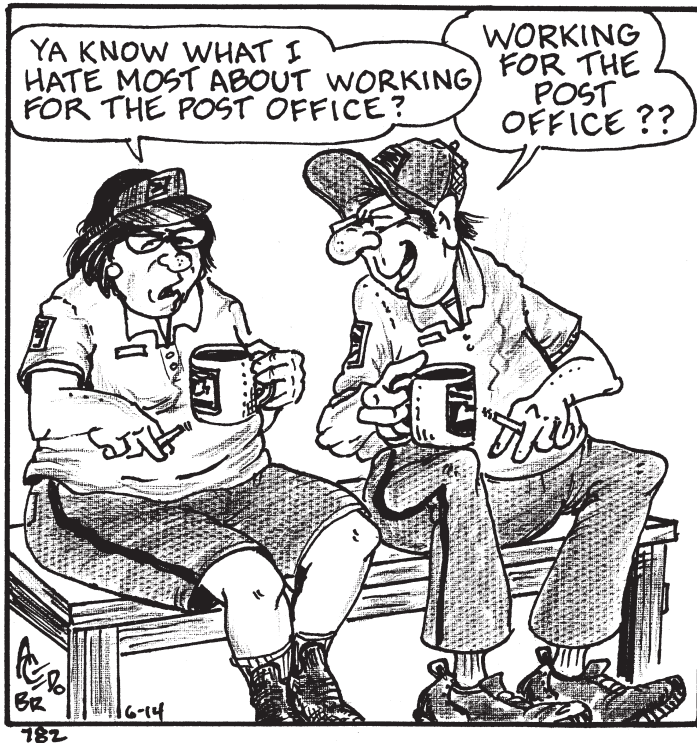
I was delivering the mail six days a week and Amazon packages on Sundays. I never once took a lunch. The union steward from West Texas chastised me, told me I had to take those breaks, because the union had

fought hard for them. But I finally wasn't doing terribly: I was mostly finishing my routes under time and taking auxiliary routes (working 30 minutes to two hours on another route after finishing the first); I was still getting screamed at most days.

OUT THERE



OUT tHeRe



I constantly reminded myself: You have chosen to work for the USPS. You can quit. Sure, you earn a paycheck of about \$1,000 every two weeks for sometimes dangerous, almost always back-and-knee-and-shoulder-tweaking work. Sure, other carriers told you to keep track of every minute you worked, because supervisors would override hours to prevent you from earning overtime. Sure, you would find out later that the local branch of the NALC reported that they were dealing with numerous complaints from CCAs who said the hours listed on their paychecks did not match their punch-in times. Sure, another carrier told you to always keep your timecard with you, because supervisors would punch you out before you were even back to the station. Sure, a district supervisor threatened that if you didn't work off the clock, you might not be worth keeping. Sure, that's absolutely a violation of the law, and there would be others.

But, I had the privilege of walking away, something my husband begged me to do on a daily basis. We are a childless couple; we could survive a few months of my unemployment. So many of my fellow CCAs didn't have that luxury. Like the veteran of the first Gulf War I worked with, who fed her children breakfast each morning, put them on the school bus, and then arrived at work early to cry in her car, fifty yards from the entrance to the station where our angry bosses awaited us.

Sundays were, by far, the least stressful.

Although Congress had decreed in 1912 that post offices would be closed on Sundays, in 2013 the USPS and Amazon teamed up to have CCAs deliver packages to Prime customers on our one day off.

We now spent that day making sure you got that thing you ordered that you absolutely needed to have delivered while you were sleeping in, at church, or at brunch. The facial expressions on folks surprised to see a mail truck on a Sunday were hilarious. I watched more than one person look at me, pull out his phone to check the date, and then quizzically look again, because, no, he wasn't confused: It *was* Sunday. It's less funny when you get your paper towels and dog food delivered on holidays; CCAs can't take them off and don't earn holiday pay.

At first, we were delivering the packages by route, just as we would during the week, and we were relaxing in our backyards by 3 p.m. Then we were told that we had to follow a set of turn-by-turn directions, that we couldn't use our by-now-photographic memory of the streets, and we were out until dinnertime.

I often delivered in my own neighborhood, and if I had followed the direc-

tions perfectly, I would've driven my vehicle over a footbridge, a curb, and through a gate on a dead-end street.

A CCA I emailed with who works on the West Coast told me that due to the "fatigue and unhappiness" of never having a day off, his "performance has dipped," and he wished the USPS would consider the mental health of its employees.

The highest number of consecutive days I worked in a row was 12. That was nothing compared to many other CCAs. But it still left me frayed at the edges, having trouble remembering what day it was, or when I had delivered a package or last been on a certain route, or even at a certain station.


Here's how a typical day works: You arrive at the station at the required time, say, 9 a.m.; some days you clock in, load up your mail and parcels, and you're on your way. Some days you're told to wait, unpaid, because your mail isn't ready, so you read the newspaper or play Candy Crush for as long as two hours before you can get started.

Other days, you're eating breakfast when your boss calls and tells you to report to a different station. You arrive there at the required time, and a supervisor greets you with, "We didn't need you," but a few hours later, finds a route for you, and you can finally get on the clock.

It wasn't until I was writing this article that I learned, from a union leader in San Antonio, that those hours we CCAs were forced to sit and wait? We should've been paid for them. This is how it was possible for me to work seven days a week and not earn overtime. The USPS is committing wage theft.

Another CCA I spoke with, who works on the East Coast, emailed me that he knows "time manipulation happens, especially to the brand newbies." He told me a recent story about a new CCA, second day on the job, who was out delivering mail after 7 p.m. That's a no-no for any carrier (they say it's for your safety; they don't want to pay you overtime). At his station, and many others, supervisors have to justify why anyone is out that late. When the carrier asked his boss what was going to happen, he explained that his supervisor "calmly said, 'She doesn't have a badge yet; she's been off the street for 20 minutes.'" The CCA couldn't yet clock herself in and out so her supervisor did it for her.

These are not stories unique to one station. There are dozens of online forums, where postal employees' complaints log thousands and thousands of pages. These things happened to me, and continue to happen to my former colleagues.

 ***The highest number of consecutive days I worked in a row was 12.***

The USPS did not respond to my request for comment regarding managerial training and labor violations.

But, you might say, those CCAs can make regular, become grossly overpaid (with a maximum base annual salary of less than \$60,000) and retire to a life of leisure. Except there's no guarantee that it won't take years and years to become a regular. Another CCA told me that with new mandatory retirement deductions and the shift to

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force employees to take on a higher percentage of their healthcare costs, a CCA he knew “made regular and actually took home less money... Seven years as a TE and then CCA—he made regular and after a month, he quit.”

A few months into the job, I got bitten by a dog. I was an hour ahead on my route and since I was delivering near my house, I giddily thought: I’m going to be able to go to the bathroom and take my first lunch break. I had just delivered to one house and was preparing the mail for the next when I saw the owner, a man I knew from my neighborhood listserv. I waved and said hello, walking through his grass as I put his mail in my hand. Then his unleashed dog, who was hidden in the unfenced front yard, bolted toward me. I pivoted to use my satchel to block her, but the dog was shorter than its reach.

In less than a few seconds, I had politely greeted a customer and his dog had taken a chunk out of my calf. The owner and his wife, who had rushed out, were horrified.

They asked if I was OK, and I thought, I’m OK, and then noticed the blood running down my leg. The dog now safely inside, I sat down in their driveway, still holding their mail, while the wife helped me clean the wound. I told her I was going to have to call my boss; I was, after all, hurt while at work.

When my assistant supervisor answered, she asked if I could keep delivering the mail, and I said I could, so I did. All bandaged up, I finished my route, without that dreamed-of lunch, and then did an hour on another.

After I arrived at the station, I sought out my head supervisor and asked if she had heard the news. “You’re probably going to get fired,” she said. Surprised by her reaction, I did the unthinkable and didn’t stay silent. I asked her if she was telling me I shouldn’t have reported my injury; she backed down, said she would fight for me, but that probably wouldn’t be enough.

I had arrived for work 10 hours ago, delivered the mail for eight hours, and earned 7.5 hours’ pay (for that half-hour lunch I didn’t take). Now I had

to go to Urgent Care and get a tetanus shot. And I was going to be fired.

There is no “It gets better” for the people who work for the Post Office. And since I’ve quit, the conversations I’ve had with the employees at my former station only confirm my depressing conclusion.

Two days later, one of my favorite carriers called me over to her station and whispered angrily, “What the hell did you do?”

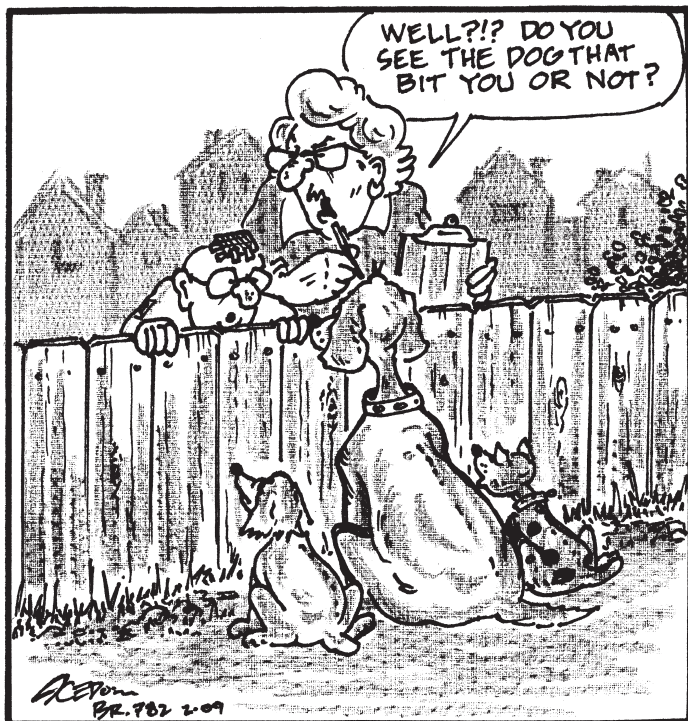
For the next several weeks, carriers from stations throughout the city told me that I shouldn’t have reported the injury, that drawing attention to myself was the worst possible thing I could do.

At my disciplinary hearing—I had a disciplinary hearing because an unleashed dog in an unfenced yard bit me—I was asked if I owned a dog. When I said yes, my supervisor said, “That’s your problem. You’re not afraid of dogs.” She asked me to repeat what I had learned during my training, and, feeling a little salty, I answered honestly: Don’t get bit. Finally she asked me, “Who is responsible for your safety?” That’s a question I knew the correct answer to: I was.

According to the NALC, ten letter carriers suffer dog-related injuries every delivery day. Google “dog kills letter carrier” and you’ll find that it happens every year.

A week after my bite, a woman in a tony neighborhood scolded me, told me I needed to “get over it,” when I refused to walk closer to hand her the mail while her snarling bulldog barked next to her. I once jumped from the ground to the hood of a car to escape a charging dog, and when its owner came to retrieve it so I could get down and continue my day, he promised his dog wouldn’t have hurt me and told me I had overreacted.

I never heard anything from my supervisors about my bite. A few weeks later, I got tangled in my laptop computer cord in the middle of the night and broke my big toe. The next morning, I realized I couldn’t safely drive, let alone walk a 14-mile route. After a tense phone conversation with



my supervisor, my husband drove me to an Urgent Care clinic, where X-rays confirmed the injury. We drove to the station so I could give my supervisor the note from my doctor, which said I would need to be out for three weeks. I told her what happened; she said nothing. I left, unsure if I'd have a job to come back to.

more respect than my academic credentials had earned me? So, as usual, I just nodded as my skin crawled.

In the following weeks, Mr. Green would go on to scream at me, "ALL YOU ARE IS A LIABILITY," "YOU EXIST ONLY TO REDUCE OVERTIME," and to enforce a rule no one

ever explained to me: We had to be off the clock by 5 p.m. Before I broke my toe, the rule was you had to be off the street and back at the station by 6.

But things had changed. While I was out, the USPS had delivered its annual fiscal report and made national news. The organization had announced that it was, yet again, way in the red, due in no

small part to that \$5 billion payment required by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act.

I tried to explain to Mr. Green, who strictly enforced the 5 p.m. deadline, that most days I wasn't able to leave the station until after 10 a.m., often with more than eight hours' worth of mail to deliver. When you factor in travel times to auxiliary routes, I could not finish by 5 p.m., even running between houses and never eating lunch.

His response? "You'll have to work off the clock." If I weren't willing to do this, he explained, I might not be worth having around. He offered another alternative: Get the routes done faster than required or every morning

admit to him that I wasn't capable of doing my job. An often-toxic work environment had become untenable.

Mr. Green didn't behave this way just to CCAs; I watched him dress down carriers who had worked for the Post Office for decades.

I quit a few weeks later, after I ended up in the emergency room. High on an IV drip of Dilaudid after a back injury I thought was just a kidney stone, one I was too worn down to file a workers' comp claim for, I had a moment of clarity: There is no "It gets better" for the people who work for the Post Office.

And since I've quit, the conversations I've had with the employees at my former station only confirm my depressing conclusion.

One CCA I recently talked with had just finished his 17th consecutive workday. Another told me she got into a small fender bender in her LLV. The owners of the other vehicle weren't hurt or upset, and the cops who came to take the report told her everything was going to be fine. When the supervisor arrived, she verbally abused the CCA so badly the cop stepped in to tell the supervisor to get herself together, to not speak to her employee that way.

You might think, after my experience, I'd be all for cutting Saturday delivery and privatizing the Post Office. You'd be wrong. Although the screaming and the hostile work environment had gotten so bad I started illegally recording conversations with my supervisors in the event that I was unjustly fired, I loved my job.

Little kids in their pajamas followed me on Saturday mornings,

*Continued on next page...*

## OUT THERE



Three weeks later, I returned, lucky to still be employed. On my first day back, I learned that a district supervisor had temporarily taken over.

When I approached him to say good morning, he introduced himself as "Mr. Green" (names have been changed throughout this article) the same way, other carriers told me, he had introduced himself to my former supervisor, who had worked for the Post Office for more than three decades. I let myself have one angry moment where I thought, "Then you should called me Dr. Stoner, asshole." But, my PhD wasn't something I ever mentioned at the station—and why would I have, when I worked with a number of veterans who deserved far

sometimes for so long that I had to walk them back home. An old man who lived on a route I often carried would walk with me and tell me jokes. When I once remarked that the weather was perfect that morning, he quipped, "Don't tell Congress. They'll find a way to mess it up."

I loved delivering birthday cards addressed to grandparents in their grandchildren's handwriting. Customers left sticky notes in their mailboxes saying, "Thank you for your hard work." People were sometimes so excited to see me at the door with their package they would give me high-fives. Even when they were only wearing towels.

I respected and adored the carriers I worked with: the one who gave me a belt when my borrowed-from-the-union shorts got too big; the one nicknamed Bullet who nicknamed me Little Girl II (an inside joke); the carrier in his late sixties who was incredibly kind and patient and once, when I was carrying his route on his day off, stopped by to help

me organize the mail in the pouring rain; the carrier who would try and pad my routes by a few minutes so I wouldn't have to run.

I would never support any action against the Post Office that would harm the employees I looked forward to seeing every day. Who would ask me how my day was, even when the question inspired my boss to scream, "I'M NOT PAYING YOU TO HAVE A CONVERSATION."

The problem with the USPS isn't the carriers. When I watch videos of them tossing packages into a river, I think: Anyone who delivers your mail has dreamed of doing that. Not because they're lazy or vindictive. But because many have no days off, no job security, and an unhealthy work environment where they are constantly forced to work in violation of labor laws.

Your carrier isn't the problem. Her boss, and her bosses, all the way up the postmaster general, are the problem. Sometimes the union is as well, when it caves to contracts, like forcing TEs to take pay cuts to become CCAs.

make some much-needed changes. Some are simple, like allowing the USPS to ship wine and beer; others are more of a throwback to the earlier times, when the USPS had non-postal responsibilities, like offering banking and notary services. More recently, the USPS inspector general, with support from Senator Elizabeth Warren, has proposed that the agency provide fair payday loans.

While we wait to see what happens, here's my advice to you, receiver of mail: Continue giving your letter carriers a Christmas bonus; they won't share it with the CCA who covers their route each week on their days off, but still, do it.

Leave waters and Gatorades and homemade cookies (a burst of sugar at the end of the route can go a long way) near your mailbox. If you live in an apartment complex, for God's sake, check your mail every day.

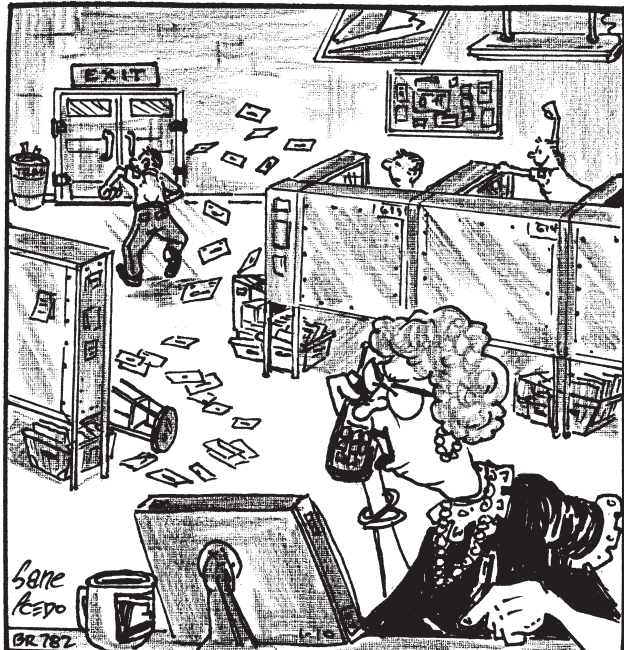
Keep waving at the people in the LLVs; it was one of the highlights of my day, some of the only positive reinforcement I ever got.

Keep your dogs leashed, and do not ever lecture your letter carrier about why she should be less afraid of dogs. Assume she's been bitten, and been treated like shit by her bosses because your lovable dog can be a real jerk. If you have a mail slot in your door, practice putting things through it yourself. If you cut your fingers, know that it cuts our fingers every day, and fix it.

The United States Post Office provides a public service—one that desperately needs reform—but it shouldn't be done on the backs of the hard-working employees who deliver your mail through snow, rain, heat, gloom of night, screaming bosses, and dog bites.

Jess Stoner is the author of *I Have Blinded Myself Writing This* (Short Flight/Long Drive Books)

#### OUT THERE



"CODE RED...CHIEF! WE HAVE A RUNNER!"

If you think this could be fixed by privatizing the Post Office, you're kidding yourselves. FedEx is dealing with numerous wage-theft lawsuits, and UPS has been accused of similar violations, as well as racial discrimination and charging customers higher-than-advertised rates.

In 2013, Senator Bernie Sanders proposed the forward-thinking Post Office Protection Act, which would



**M**ichael Gonzalez started his career as a City Carrier Assistant on June 2013. He is no stranger to the USPS. His Mom is Annette Ortega—clerk from Stockdale station—and his step-dad is John Ortega (City Letter Carrier and also the Vice-President of NALC Branch 782.)

He knew carrying mail wasn't easy, but he didn't think it was a such hard job before he started...

He now has a different outlook: ***It's definitely challenging on many days.*** However, he really likes his job! He likes it so much, he encouraged his brother to apply. His brother now works at Stockdale Station.



Michael has lived in Bakersfield all his life but this is his first job being outdoors. His previous employment was making plastic plates, bowls, etc in an indoor factory. He was very excited about being outdoors. "Walking, getting exercise. Cool!" He has lost weight and his legs are now "toned". Delivering mail out of South Station, which has majority of walking routes, is the biggest factor.

Even though the job is challenging—especially during the summer months and now being swamped with political mail—he has lots of positive things to say about his job.

He thinks it's a cool job, pays well, and his co-workers are cool, too. He has nice customers and they appreciate what we do. He wants to get more involved with the Union because he knows it is important to know your rights.

Michael is definitely getting his hours. He doesn't complain when he has to work 6-7 days straight a couple of weeks at a time. He thinks Sunday delivery is cool and easier than delivering mail during the week. Even when he has aches and pain, he keeps going. He has a great work ethic!

He did feel he was thrown out there to fend for himself...which is true. After your On the Job Instructor (OJI) training—and you start a new day by yourself—you are basically given an arrow key, truck keys, scanner and map and off you go! (*I certainly do not miss those days!*) I am sure that every Letter Carrier out there has a story of one time or another during the beginning of your career when you had a break down. I certainly did during my 3 month probation as a Part-time Flex (PTF).

Michael has had a dog incident which taught him to be leery of dogs. As he approached a yard for a delivery, he had seen a big dog on a leash but he couldn't tell how long the leash was. He was on the far edge of the yard but the dog was still able to reach him and it then bit his shoes!!

Luckily, there was no puncture wound and it could have been a ***REALLY*** serious attack!

He advises everyone...especially new CCAs to "STAY ALERT", and ask lots of questions!

He says, "When you get overwhelmed on heavy mail days, slow down. Don't panic! Get your bearings back and continue on. It ***will*** get better. Stick with it, think of the future and the long term benefits with making this a career! Before you know it, you will have your own route. You just have to 'pay your dues.'"

Michael does have a great outlook and optimism that everyone can benefit from.

MABEL BULLIS  
East Brundage

## A Focus on Our Future: CCA Michael Gonzalez.....

**Win  
\$500?**

Each and every month Branch 782 sponsors a drawing to encourage ***YOU*** to come to our Meeting\*. There was no winner in September.

So? Do ***YOU*** have a chance to win the \$500? Yup. Be there...

\*The fine print: ***TO WIN THE MONEY YOU HAVE TO BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING WHEN THE NAMES ARE DRAWN. Hmmm, \$500...***

# Johnny on the Spot



## NALC and USPS agree to new joint route adjustment process

On September 23, 2014 the NALC and USPS agreed upon a new joint route adjustment process called City Delivery Route Alternative Adjustment Process (CDRAAP) for 2014 and 2015.

The new “Memorandum of Understanding Re: City Delivery Route Alternative Adjustment Process – 2014-2015 (M-01845)” establishes the process. Additionally, the parties agreed to the Memorandum of Understanding Re: Alternative Evaluation and Adjustment Processes (M-01847), which covers locally developed joint route adjustment during the term of the new joint process. More details, including a jointly agreed upon document explaining the process in detail, will be available in the near future.

On Sunday October 19th, five members of Branch 782 (including myself) will be attending a rap session in Pasadena. NALC National

President Rolando will be in attendance to explain the details of the route adjustment agreement.

Also, we have a new NALC website! It has really been upgraded to better serve our membership. Check it out when you get a chance: [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

I would like to congratulate Alex Dang on his recent retirement from the postal service. I had the pleasure of working with Alex at Stockdale when I began as a letter carrier nine years ago when he *only* had 35 or so years. Have a long healthy retirement, “Dangeroo”!

We will be giving an update from the rap session at this month’s meeting. See you there.

John Ortega  
Branch 782 Vice-President

## Have an Idea for Fred?\*

Fred Acedo  
Br. 782 S.A.N.E.  
P.O. Box 6532  
Bakersfield, CA  
93386-6532

*\*You never know what you might get...*

### OUT THERE



Have you noticed the sun is setting earlier already? It won't be long until we set the clocks back to Standard Time. Another annual sign of autumn's approach is postal management's moving starting times. Here then, are your guidelines to follow when the shades of night fall while you are still on the clock delivering mail. PLEASE, follow them to avoid getting undeserved discipline:

1. If your day's workload would indicate you may not be finished delivering mail prior to the end of safe daylight, you must inform your immediate supervisor of this fact. Then, ask them how you are to deal with the situation. **Follow their instructions.**
2. If you are delivering mail and realize darkness will occur before you complete your assignment, call the immediate supervisor and inform them of your situation. Ask them for instructions and **follow their instructions.**
3. Should darkness begin to impair your progress and produce unsafe conditions, call the immediate supervisor and inform them that it has become too hazardous, with reasons given. Ask them for instructions and **follow their instructions.**
4. If you were instructed to attempt delivery of the mail in the darkness and the unsafe conditions remain, attempt delivery until **YOU** determine it has become too hazardous. Then return to the office.
5. If upon return to the office you still have undelivered mail, report this fact to the supervisor. State all the factors which lead you to believe the conditions had become too hazardous.
6. If the supervisor instructs you to attempt delivery of the remaining mail, **follow their instructions**, until YOU once again determine the conditions are too hazardous.
7. **Once** again, inform the supervisor of any curtailed mail and state the reasons this mail was curtailed.

**Yes**, this sounds like an exercise in futility, but you are protecting yourself from the charge of failure to follow instructions. Just ask me if you don't believe it. And, understand that just because it is dark, doesn't necessarily excuse curtailing mail deliveries. There must be a safety factor involved to warrant curtailing of mail deliveries. And above all else – **Follow their instructions!**

Jerry Pyfer

# “It's Dark, Can't You See?”

Article courtesy of the Rockford, IL *Branch 245 Newsletter* published by NALC Branch 245 in October 2014

# This is IMPORTANT:

The Union has 14 days to file a grievance from the date of incident. *Please do not wait until the 14th day to contact us!*

If you need Union representation — whether its for a workplace issue or some type of disciplinary action — (like a Letter Of Warning) here are a few things you should know.

1. Contact your Shop Steward *immediately*. If you didn't understand this statement, read this next one: "Contact your Shop Steward **IMMEDIATELY**." If there is no Shop Steward in the office, contact the Branch Office immediately. Do not delay because you don't think that this is a big thing. **IT IS!!!!**

2. Be prepared to write a statement and explain in detail what the workplace issue is.

3. Be prepared to identify any potential witnesses

4. **DO NOT** wait until the 14th day to contact the Union Representatives! **CONTACT US RIGHT AWAY.** We have 14 days from the date of incident to file a grievance. Issues take time to investigate. We need time to request the appropriate information, review the information, interview witnesses, etc.

## Weingarten Rights

Federal labor law—in what is known as the Weingarten rule—gives each employee the Right to representation during any investigatory interview which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline. (This Right is founded upon the decision rendered in NLRB v. J. Weingarten, U.S. Supreme Court, 1975.)

Here are things to know in the event the employer wants to conduct an investigative interview for alleged misconduct.

1. If your manager informs you they are going to conduct an investigative interview which could lead to disciplinary action, ask for a Shop Steward **immediately**. If your Shop Steward is not there contact the Branch Office **immediately!** (This same rule applies for interviews with the Postal Inspectors and OIG.)

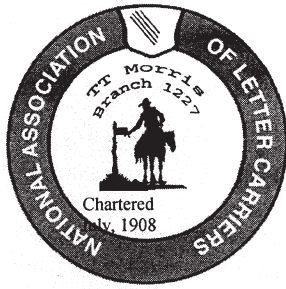
2. Find out exactly what allegation the employer is making against you.

3. Talk to your Shop Steward before going in for an investigative interview.

4. When the employer is conducting the interview, only answer the question that is being asked. **DO NOT** give the employer any extra information because you think that it will show you are cooperating and that this will help you out!

5. If your manager refuses to provide you Union representation, inform your manager that you are not going to answer any questions without any representation. *You cannot get in trouble for refusing to participate in a investigative interview without Union representation.* If the employer refuses to provide you Union representation for an investigative interview, **CONTACT THE BRANCH OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.**

**IMPORTANT:** Your manager *IS NOT* required to automatically provide you Union representation when they conduct an investigative interview. **YOU** *have to ask* for the Union representation. If your manager brings you in the office and does not inform you that it is a investigative interview and starts asking you questions which, you think, could lead to discipline, inform your manager immediately that you are not going to answer any questions without Union representation present!



# The Red River Carrier

NALC BRANCH 1227, WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

Bowie, Breckenridge, Burkburnett, Electra, Graham, Hedley, Henrietta,  
Iowa Park, Megargel, Mineral Wells, Olney, Quanah and Vernon Merged

October 2014

Volume 24 Issue 10

## Your Rights ... Don't Give Them Away!

by Larry Snyder, Secretary/Treasurer (Retired)

It's amazing to me what letter carriers will do to appease managers. These managers are NOT your friend. Even if you claim them on your list of friends they WILL stab you in the back if their given those instructions, or, even on occasion if they're not given instructions to do so.

Each and every letter carrier has in their possession something called Weingarten Rights. These Weingarten Rights give you the right and opportunity to have union representation if you feel any sort of interview could lead to discipline.

Why on earth would you sign away those rights? Why on earth would anybody sign a blank sheet of paper for someone, a manager, to put on that paper any dang thing they please?

Ask any letter carrier who has had union representation in a disciplinary case if the discipline stuck. Most everyone will tell you "No." Did you know that progressive discipline can lead to removal? Discussion, Letter of Warning, Seven Day Suspension, Fourteen Day Suspension, Removal is the normal route for letter carriers to be fired from their job.

So, if you get that letter of warning, and it stays in your Official Personal File (often called the OPF) for two years, that's your first start. How would you like to stick it out as a CCA for a few years, make career status and then get fired. If you let managers do what they're currently doing, that's certainly a possibility.

So, I'm asking you, PLEASE do not buy into management's story about "You really don't need your union representative in this meeting. Now just sign this paper that says you understand your Weingarten Rights and that you aren't requesting union representation."

The reason the don't want you to have union representation is because what they're doing is probably wrong on so many levels.

When management calls you into the office, you ask them if this discussion could lead to discipline. If they answer "yes" then you ask for union representation. In all likelihood they'll tell you "No" and then begin to discuss giving you discipline. At that point, you ask for union representation.

Never, never, ever, allow management to give you discipline without union representation. Never, never, ever, sign away your rights to management. Never, never, ever, sign a blank sheet of paper and give it to management.

And, above all, remember, management IS NOT your friend, I don't care how many drinks you share together.

Article courtesy of the Wichita Falls, TX *Red River Carrier* published by NALC Branch 1227 in October 2014

# Minutes of the September 2014 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd day of August, 2014 at the Branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sargeant-at-Arms Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Avenal, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Hillcrest, Lamont, McFarland, Oildale, Shafter, South, Stockdale and Taft. Also present was Newsletter Editor Basil Zuniga; S.A.N.E. Fred Acedo; Webmaster Rick Plummer; Photographer Anita Holderman; OWCP Representative Rick Gerdes; Assistant Treasurer Debbie Guillet, and Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee. The Minutes of the August 26, 2014 were read and accepted with no additions or corrections.

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP:** Applications were received from Laura Romero, Ivan Dyqiangco, Raul Villa, Nicholas Edwards, Brandon Walton, Carly Hatfield, Jorge Beltran, Mike Bonneau, Jessie Guerra and Christopher Castruita.

**REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** Teresa Ortega reported that just about everything is ready for the picnic. We will be serving hamburgers and hotdogs. Picnic will be 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Food will be served from 11:00 to 1:00. Guests will be \$10.00 each. Basil Zuniga reported that South Station folded the newsletter this month, they were not here "in force" but they got it done. Next month will be Hillcrest Station's turn. He also discussed the Web version of the newsletter and the new GPS technology. Frank Martinez of the Social and Recreation Committee reported that the USPS picnic will be Sunday, September 28th at the Kern River Picnic grounds at Ming Lake. They will be serving deep pit and chicken. Tickets are \$6.00 each and kids eating hotdogs are free. They will be selling T-shirts for \$5.00 - \$7.00 each. See Frank for tickets. Molly Biggar reported that three Acedo cartoon books were sold. There are 1198 remaining. Mark Ramirez reminded members that open season for health benefits starts in November.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** John Ortega read the proposed By-Laws change: "Where as any Shop Steward that retires and still wants to be shop steward he/she will get an additional \$10.00 pay for time spent on fact findings and any grievance that needs to be filed

and \$10.00 for reviewing paperwork off the clock." The By-Laws Committee recommended disapproval. A discussion was held and the membership voted to approve the Committee's recommendation of disapproval.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION:** The Color Coded Calendars are here; see Kim Gerdes to get calendars. Mike Towery reported that CCA's will be hired for 4 weeks at Christmas. He also reported that members should receive a ballot for the National Officer election by October 8th. If any member does not receive a ballot by that date they need to contact a Branch Officer to get a ballot. Only an officer can request a replacement ballot. Mike reported that the USPS stopped all route inspections in anticipation of a new JRAP agreement. Mark Ramirez presented Teresa Ortega with a framed color copy of the poem he wrote about her, thanking her for all her hard work on the picnic. Alvie Ramos asked for a moment of silence for Retired member Bill Marchand who passed away recently. Basil and members present shared memories about Bill.

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Anita Holderman reported that the income for April is \$11,897.54.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Molly Biggar reported for February 2014

Beginning Balance	\$80,095.19
Dues & Income	\$11,785.02
Interest Income	\$0.00
Total Balance	\$91,880.21
Expenses	\$11,316.41
Ending Balance	\$80,563.80

## OUT THERE



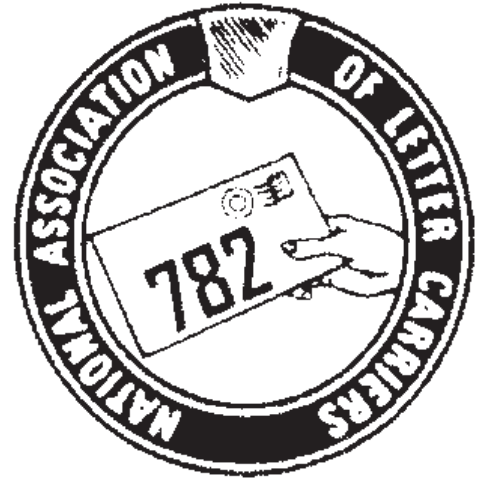
The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Randy Courson. The General Meeting Drawing for \$500.00 would have been won by Laura Davis if she had been present.

There were 41 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

KIM GERDES  
NALC Branch 782 Recording Secretary



## Non-Member List October 2014\*



**Kenneth Chambers and C.J. Dobbs**  
The very first Oildale Post Office City Letter Carriers on the day that delivery was instituted in that city.

Source: April 4, 1940  
*Bakersfield Californian*

### Downtown Station

S. Kirby  
J. Cruz

### South Station

**100% UNION!!!**

### Brundage/East Bakersfield

D. Kinglee

### Hillcrest

**100% UNION!!!**

### Dole Court

D. Morris  
S. Hancock

### Stockdale

J. Oh  
*M. Martinez*

### Camino Media

*C. Rodriguez*

### Arvin

**100% UNION!!!**

### Avenal

*B. Howard*

### California City

*S. T. Ivory*

### Delano

L.A. Campos  
C.V. Quebral

### Lamont

**100% UNION!!!**

### Ridgecrest

S. P. Pierce  
G.D. Weaver  
*B. Leroy*

### Shafter

M. D. Voights  
L. M. New

### Taft

*A. Veach*  
B. M. Krier  
K. J. Hughes  
*T. Bullard*  
*A. M. Rodriguea*

### Tehachapi

**100% UNION!!!**

### Trona

**100% UNION!!!**

### Wasco

**100% UNION!!!**

\*CCA names are in italics.

# Something ALL Carriers need to appreciate...

It should be a source of pride to today's Letter Carriers that from the NALC's very inception, the union displayed deep concern for the plight of **ALL** Carriers—those in small cities as well as those in big, the old as well as the young, Substitutes as well as Regulars. When the Letter Carriers met in Milwaukee and Boston in 1889 and 1890, three issues were of paramount importance: a uniform wage structure, a minimum wage for Substitutes, and a guaranteed pension for Carriers. After these meetings, the NALC—as the representative of over 5,000 Letter Carriers—began its long, hard struggle to improve the working conditions of Uncle Sam's "gray coated carriers." Priority number one was equalization of wages. The NALC believed that **ALL** Letter Carriers should receive an annual wage of \$1,200, regardless of the size of the city in which they worked. (At one time, there were two categories of Letter Carriers: "Village Carriers" and "City Carriers". City Carriers received a higher wage despite the fact that Village Carriers — in many instances — were working just as hard and carrying just as much volume as their counterparts who, by virtue of the fact that they delivered mail in a large metropolitan city, received more pay because they were classified as "City" Carriers...)

**On October 19, 1949, the NALC finally achieved one of its longstanding objectives—equalization of wages for all Letter Carriers. This meant Carriers began receiving the same wages regardless of the size of the community in which they worked.**

Source: *Carriers in a Common Cause* —The NALC's official history

# 2014 NALC HBP Info

## At a glance...



NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
Mental & Substance Precertification	1-877-468-1016
**Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CVS/CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
<b>NURSE ASSISTANT (24/7)</b>	<b>1-877-220-6252</b>
CVS/CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
CIGNA Organ Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-521-0244
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-558-9443
<b>CIGNA Dental Discount Program</b>	<b>1-877-521-0244</b>
Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-333-4636
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213
PostalEase Human Resources USPS	1-877-477-3273
Quest Lab Services (Bakersfield)	(661) 631-8520
LabCorp Lab Services	(661) 631-9258
<b>Shared Services (Retirees Info!!!)</b>	<b>1-877-477-3273</b>

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

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

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

**Optimum Health 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**

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

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

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

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

**Mark Ramirez, NALC Branch 782 HBP Rep.**  
**(661) 398-6075**

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

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

## Some Websites for You...

Center for Disease Control	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">http://www.cdc.gov</a>
American Public Health Assoc.	<a href="http://www.alpha.org">http://www.alpha.org</a>
American Cancer Society	<a href="http://www.cancer.org">http://www.cancer.org</a>
American Heart Association	<a href="http://americanheart.org">http://americanheart.org</a>
American Lung Association	<a href="http://www.lunusa.org">http://www.lunusa.org</a>
Diabetes Foundation	<a href="http://www.diabetes.org">http://www.diabetes.org</a>
<b>YOUR Personal Health Record</b>	<a href="http://www.nalc.org/depart.hbp">http://www.nalc.org/depart.hbp</a>
Asthma Information Center	<a href="http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma">http://www.ama.assn.org/special/asthma</a>
HR Shared Service— <a href="mailto:HRSHAREDSERVICES@GSA.GOV">HRSHAREDSERVICES@GSA.GOV</a>	

**Check out this PPO: Sendas Northwest Urgent Care**  
**3409 Calloway Suite 101 Bakersfield, California 93312**  
**Phone: (661) 587-2500**

**Sendas Southwest Urgent Care**  
**9450 Ming Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93309**  
**Phone: (661) 587-2500**

**Hours: M-F 8:00 am - 9:00 pm; Sat & Sun 8:00 am - 8:00 pm**

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



# HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS OPEN SEASON

**NOVEMBER 10th through DECEMBER 8th 2014**

The health benefit plan open season will be starting next month, and I would like to urge all NALC members to take a good look at your present health benefit plan, if it is not the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

Our NALC Health Benefit Plan is the best choice for Letter Carriers and their family. The first reason is, our NALC Health Benefit Plan is union member owned! And, our NALC health benefit plan is "NON-PROFIT."!!!!

All profits are placed back into our NALC Health Benefit Plan. Most health plans are that are available to Letter Carriers during open season are "FOR PROFIT" — and it means just that!!!

Our Director of NALC Health Benefit Plan is Brian Hellman. He is a Letter Carrier. Our National Trustees (Lawrence Brown, Mike Gill, and Randall Keller) are Letter Carriers. They and their team members negotiate with OPM the best possible health benefits at the lowest possible premiums for our Letter Carrier member. We have a strong union and we are very fortunate to have had strong national officers!! They are Letter Carriers who have been able to negotiate, on our behalf: contract language, pay, cost of living, and retirement. The list is long and we should all be proud to have such great leadership!

Our NALC Health Benefit Plan is an extension of our "Union Solidarity" and we MUST support OUR NALC Health Benefit Plan. It is part of our NALC union family!! Who is going to look out for our membership BETTER than OUR OWN UNION???

Non-profit, union membership owned, excellent benefit coverage, reasonable premiums, HBP Representative in most branches, and it is accepted nation and world-wide !!!

I hope, during this open season, our Branch 782 members who are enrolled in another health plan, will make the *CORRECT UNION CHOICE* and enroll in our union member owned NALC Health Benefit Plan.

## NALC Health Benefit premiums for 2015

Active Members (Self)	\$76.94 bi-weekly
Annuitant/Retiree (Self)	\$166.70 monthly
Active Members (Family)	\$155.70 bi-weekly
Annuitant/Retiree (Family)	\$337.35 monthly

NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan (Self) \$50.06 bi-weekly  
 NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan (Fam.) \$108.70 bi-weekly

NALC Value Option Health Plan (Self) \$43.10 biweekly  
 NALC Value Option Health Plan (Fam.) \$93.59 biweekly

*The "Consumer Driven" and "Value Option" premiums listed are the biweekly amount*

**AFTER**

*the Postal Service has paid \$125.00 toward the monthly premium.*

For Branch 782 members who wish to purchase a supplemental Dental/Vision plan, log on to [www.BENFEDS.COM](http://www.BENFEDS.COM) or call 1-877-888-3337

Our members can change enrollment from one health plan to another by submitting a Postal form SF 2809 or by using the POSTALEASE online or telephone enrollment system. You will need a pin number, and this can be requested at same site. Your postal ID number from your pay stub will be needed for pin number request.

OPM'S OPEN SEASON ONLINE EXPRESS  
 "ANNUITANTS" call 1-800-332-9798

OPM'S RETIREMENT INFORMATION CENTER  
 "ANNUITANTS" call 1-888-767-6738  
 for HEARING IMPAIRED TDD call 1-800-878-5707

MARK RAMIREZ  
 NALC Health Benefit Representative  
 NALC Golden Empire Branch 782

### OUT THERE



# Dang, Alex! 48 years!!

It should be self-evident that Alex Dang is a very **PERSISTENT** person. Once he starts something, he sees his job through to completion!

Like most of us, Alex made some youthful decisions that he was fortunate to survive. He shared that—at a young age—it took him five strikes with a ballpeen hammer on a bullet to get something to happen...

With that in mind, here is Alex's "story":

I was attending Bakersfield College in 1967 and also working part-time evenings at the K-Mart on 34th Street earning maybe \$1.70 an hour.

My best friend from BHS mentioned that he was going to apply for a job at the U.S. Post Office....that a part time position was available. In May/June of 1967, I put in my application at the U.S. Post Office for a position as a 20 hour Regular, doing night-time mail box collections for maybe \$1.95 and hour. I was interviewed in August 1967 and reported to work on September 9, 1967.

The whole intent was to find a better paying job while attending school and to put some money in savings so I could go on to a four year College.

When I turned 18 years old, I registered for the draft...just to be that "law abiding citizen"! During my 2nd year at BC, my first DRAFT NOTICE arrived, and I filed for a deferment. My sister and I were attending BC at the same time and my parents could only afford to send one of us away to a four year school. I told my parents to send my sister (she graduated from San Jose State).

During my third year at BC (when I was still a part-time postal employee, my INDUCTION NOTICE ARRIVED: Report to the Greyhound Bus Depot at 0430 for a bus ride to the

induction center.. I can't remember the date but I do remember that I thought that it would be better if I finished out my 3rd year at BC. I also decided that if I was being drafted, why not just join up for 3 or 4 years and get a education while serving my country. My older brother was a U.S. Air Force and career officer. He agreed.

I really wanted to become a military X-ray Technician and it didn't matter whether it was in the Army, Air Force, Navy or Coast Guard. I discovered that only the U.S. Army offered a 21 week school for X-Ray.

After speaking with the Army recruiter, I found out that I could sign up and take a DELAYED ENLISTMENT, and go active duty after my 21st birthday, plus finish my 3rd year at BC! I turned 21 on August 13, 1969 and entered the U.S. Army on the 18th of August 1969.

The folks in the Post Office Personnel Office at our 18th & G Street Post Office did all the paperwork allowing me MILITARY LEAVE during my term of enlistment. John Loustalot was the Postmaster in 1967 and Patty Baird was his secretary. It was on her advice, that I chose to take military leave from the Post Office. (I hope I remembered her name correctly...)

I went to Ft. Ord, California for 8 weeks BASIC TRAINING, went to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas in San Antonio for 19 weeks of very condensed x-ray training and then flew back out to Ft. Ord Hospital

for 2 weeks additional training in the x-ray department.

After receiving graduation documents, I was ordered to take 8 days leave, then report to Travis Air Force Base and make my 27 hour journey to Viet Nam. I was in country for 11 months and 23 days and then returned to Ft. Ord and worked at that hospital till the U.S. Army gave me a 6 month drop, so I only ended serving 2.5 years total time on active duty.

Although, I was originally DRAFTED. I wanted to gain something more, than just be handed a weapon for shooting enemies of my country. My GOAL, during this time period, was to make this experience something I could carry into the future. Helping to save lives seemed like it would be more rewarding.

My MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) is 91P10/20/30....X-Ray Tech (Graduating Class date 30 March 1970). I was assigned to MILPHAP Team 27, City of MOC HOA, the capital city of Kien Thuong Province.

I was in Vietnam to replace an x-ray tech who had already gone home by the time I arrived. Three months after I arrived at Team 27...the OR/Operating Room Tech



went home. For the next 9 months, I cross trained (on the job training) as the OR Tech, assisting the SURGEON, handing the surgery instruments to the Dr. as he worked to save the life of the wounded. This was the MOST REWARDING PART OF MY MILITARY CAREER!

I was discharged at the rank/pay grade of SPECIALIST 5 from Ft. Ord, California... on 22FEB1972 and then continued my service in the U.S. Army Reserve.



In conjunction with my Reserve duty—at 55 years young—I was activated for OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) and left my route and my customers for 18 months (from January 2004 through June 2005).

My unit from Bakersfield was the 736th Transportation Company. My company was assigned to a base called CEDAR II, located in IRAQ. This is the city where Jessica Lynch's convoy was ambushed.

By the time my unit arrived in country, Kellogg, Brown and Root had established many tent cities for units conducting operations in the war zone. We operated out of a base area protected by air & ground personnel. We were never hit. The tents were air conditioned, so we could rest and sleep on double decker bunks. Once we geared up and walked outside, then it became a furnace. I have pictures of thermostats reading 128 degrees and one reading 132

degrees. Working in Bakersfield is not a problem.

BEFORE I LEFT FOR IRAQ, I PROMISED MAUREEN THAT—UPON MY RETURN—I WOULD RETIRE FROM THE U.S. ARMY. I DID JUST THAT IN FEBRUARY OF 2006.

With my Active and Reserve duty my TOTAL TIME IN THE MILITARY: 33 years, 9 months and 7 days....per official retirement documents.

Anyway, back to my Post Office history! I returned to work at the Annex March of 1972.

During that time, we had something

called “oral bidding”. You showed up in a room with other folks who wanted an assignment and raised your hand. I heard about a truck run assignment that was available but I was out bid by the senior bidder: Richard Tucker. As I recall, this was the last oral bidding at the 18th & G Main Post Office.

Richard Tucker had vacated route 907. All I had to do was raise my hand to make my bid for Route 907. I remember the look

in John Howlett's eye as he asked, “Where the hell did *you* come from? How could you have seniority over me?” (Thank you, again, Patty, for suggesting that I take military leave instead of quitting! It helped big time!!!)

I was happy to have a route to call home. Robbie on Route 905 helped me out the most. Route 907 and 905 are both located in Kern City. Robbie had his ways and it was all about helping people, treating people right...and giving people service.

It took me actually about five years to decide that I was in the right place. IN THE ARMY, WE HAVE A SAYING, “IF YOU DO THE 10, YOU DO THE 20.” The 20 year letter allows you to draw retirement pay when you retire from ACTIVE DUTY. In the ARMY RESERVES, you can do “the twenty”, but you have to be 60 years of age to draw a retirement.

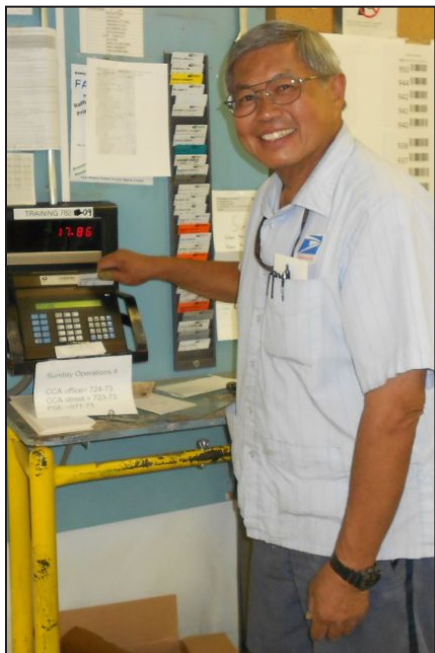
I was on Route 907 for 15 years. The final year on 907 was spoiled by a absolutely ruthless DUMB ASS who wanted to leave his mark as the most evil Manager/Future Postmaster in the history of Bakersfield.

If he reads this, he should turn off his OXYGEN and light a cigarette to see if his black lungs will give him pleasure. Just for information: YOU ARE THE MONKEY!!!! If you had not helped me hurt my back, I would not have bid off 907. From 907, I went to 925, 930, 928, 930 and 913. I never carried 928 one time. I rebid 930, out of the goodness of my heart, because Evie Tan asked me to give it up, so her friend could bid on it. End of story!

There are a lot of people that I came to know well during my time as a Letter Carrier. I will tell no stories, but John Howlett, Paul Zabala, Paul Trombetta, Mike Newton, Art Ornelas, Chris Pimentia, Clifford Fehdrau, Al LaBarge, Lew “KILLER” Garvin, Ron Huston, S.L. Surber, Marty Joregenson, Robbie Robison, Walt, George, Rudy,

*Continued on next page...*

Gordo, Gary Kimball (Bodfish), and Richard Tucker. (And, there was also Mr. Fry who was the mail carrier for my mom & dad's house. He used to write notes on my mail from home when I was in Nam!)



**MY FAVORITE MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS ALL PASSED THE "HI, HONEY TEST"....A SMILE IS A GREAT GIFT FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER.**

There was *only* ONE manager that failed the "Hi, Honey" test. He's the one guy who was a CHAIN SMOKER...(A WEAKNESS). And it really showed.

It broke his heart when smoking was banned from all Federal Buildings. When he was here, if you protested his poor smoking manners, he would just come closer and blow smoke in your case.

He wanted to be the terror of the station. His name was very common. But, once again, (a senior moment filled with laughter and joy) his name is NOT WORTH MENTIONING. I have spoken to people who JUST HATE HIM. Everyone should feel sorry for him....He was not a happy man. "ALL HE WANTED WAS HIS CIGARETTES AND BEER."



Letter Carriers and dogs? I experienced dog attacks at least seven times during my Postal Career. Only three broke the skin, one was just a bruise, and the other three found me wearing ripped uniforms.

I got to know many animals on my routes. I enjoyed the trained dogs who will carry the mail to their masters. As a Letter Carrier, all I had to do was rubber band the mail so it would not slide out of the dogs grip. I still had to carry the parcels up to the door. Maybe they could have been better trained?

I recently went to Stockdale Station to get my Vacation Hold mail on Saturday after spending a week in San Diego. I will go back down and visit after my morning session at the gym. I enjoy playing cards with the gang during their break. Now that I'm retired, I have a question. Does the USPS gives out RETIRED ID CARDS? The U.S. Army has given me a ID CARD that say U.S. ARMY RETIRED and it has no expiration date, it says INDEFINITE. TILL DEATH DO US PART.

I have no regrets at retiring when I did. I started in September of 1967 and retired in September 2014 with 2628.72 sick leave hours on the books. I had the sick leave when I needed it and used it when I really needed it. BENEFITS are a good thing to have!

I was advised by HR that my last and final work check would be delivered as a



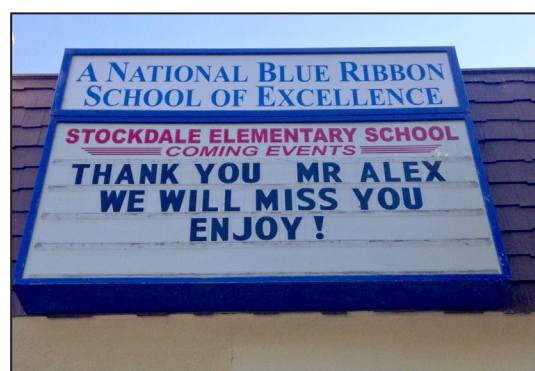
hard copy to my last place of assignment. Darlene, "THE BOSS", notified me of its arrival and I have picked it up and deposited it and spent it. Now I can say that I am on a fixed income and LIVING OFF MY BETTER HALF. LOL!!!! Should I say, that my check is being processed and will be direct deposited when OPM decides to give it up?

At this point, I really don't have any plans on any adventures that I want to take. After I start the renovation of my home and finish that, I will look at pursuing other projects. What fun!! There are always options.

I am not tied down to any one thing. It is good to have week ends free so I can participate in some chosen outdoor activities. Right now, cleaning out my garage is high on my list. I have to start somewhere!

I do have one parting comment: "All of our customers are expecting good service. Service with a smile is a good thing."

# Dang, Alex! The real party was out on the route!!



Maureen Dang accompanied Alex on that last day of delivering. She was overwhelmed by the sight of balloons, smiling customers, signs, cards in mailboxes and other congratulations offered to Alex *in block after block* of his final journey! It was a real testament!



# DOHERTY & DONELON SCHOLARSHIPS

**Deadline: This form must be returned to NALC Headquarters no later than December 31, 2014.**

## 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, 2014.

## 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, 2015. (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, 2015.

## Regulations

- Scholarship is to be used toward pursuing undergraduate

degree at an accredited college of recipient's choice.

- Winners may accept other college scholarship assistance in addition to the NALC award.
- Any change of schools or course of study must be done only with the permission of the NALC Scholarship Committee.
- A transcript of grades must be forwarded to the committee at the end of each school year.
- If winner suffers certified serious illness, scholarship will be held in abeyance for not more than one year.
- If unusual conditions are going to require an interruption in schooling, recipient must state reason(s) in writing to the Scholarship Committee and request that the scholarship be held in abeyance. Request(s) will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision rendered.
- If the NALC member is suspended by his/her local NALC branch or enters supervision, scholarship will be cancelled.

## Terms of awards

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

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

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

- Children of NALC national officers are not eligible.

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

## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print clearly)

Please send instructions as to how I can compete for a scholarship award. I am a senior in the 2014-15 school year.

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

letter carrier \_\_\_\_\_

of Branch No. \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

My address is \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of branch officer \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of NALC parent member \_\_\_\_\_ Printed name of branch officer \_\_\_\_\_  
(or spouse if deceased)

NALC parent's Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This form must be returned no later than December 31, 2014, to

the NALC Scholarship Committee,

in care of the National Association of Letter Carriers,

100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

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

# Branch Picnic

October 12, 2014  
Jastro Park



*More pictures next month! And, possibly, maybe even a report on how the picnic went!*





# "I Don't Know"

**Recording Secretary**  
Scott Falkowski

I recently came across a bar in Middle Inlet, Wisconsin called the "I Don't Know Saloon." I thought what a stupid name for a bar. Then I realized how unique and genius the name was. If your significant other calls to find out where you are, you can always state, "I don't know." You will not be lying.

I have heard that Managers, Supervisors, and 204B's were bringing carriers into the office to find out why their office and street times vary. One Manager stated to a carrier that he traveled this carrier 6 weeks ago on a Tuesday. The carrier had 400 flats and 127 letters and completed the route in 8 hours. Now the carrier had less volume and took longer. The Boss asked what took them so long. The right answer is you guessed it, "I Don't Know!" You wouldn't be lying.

Most of us cannot remember what happened yesterday. Now some management person is trying to rationalize your difference in time on your route and has to answer to a service champ or CSOM or Operations Support person who does not know what we do or how we do it. It's like drawing up a play in football, or making out a starting lineup in baseball. Just because something worked one time it may not work the next. There are intangibles. Weather, traffic, age, etc. The easiest answer is, "I Don't Know."

Management is seeking an answer from you that they will use against you. They already have a predetermined judgment for why it took you longer on your route. It's because you were screwing off! I love to argue when management uses this mentality. As the great Supervisor Forrest Gump once said "Stupid is as stupid does." I ask questions like, out of those 400 pieces how many were for each house, the same split, etc.? Did the 400 flats have more pages, thicker or heavier pages? Were there cast iron staples in these flats? What was the font on these flats, were they easily readable? It is kind of like the Abbott and Costello routine of who's on first.

Rumor has it that we will soon be in another joint route adjustment process (J-RAP). Carriers will

be asked several questions to determine the route value of your bid assignment. You should take the opportunity to review your office and street times. Make sure route values are based on you not anyone else. Make sure auxiliary assistance is properly recorded. Be ready to respond with YOUR evaluation of your assignment. Operations Support already has a fixed number of routes to be eliminated city wide. They will steal your relay time, screw you on office functions, and any other place they can save milliseconds. They are like mice (Rats) fitting their bodies in any nook and cranny so they can save their cheese eating jobs.

Your office time ends once you go through the doors to the dock, not once you are fully loaded. Your street time ends the first time you go from the dock through the doors. There is no 10 minute limit on p.m. office time (it is management's goal). You get the time you need to perform all p.m. office tasks daily. You do have the right to get your first split from the DPS and place it in your satchel on office time.

The 18 and 8 casing standard is only for adjusting routes. If you cannot achieve this standard and show no time wasting practices, management can and will adjust your route to that standard, however they will not be able to manage you to this standard. "WSH" endorsements on sequenced mailings are cased volume (Shop Now's). Casing Shop Now's generally takes longer. Third bundles may be unstrapped and bundled by splits on office time. Dated mailings should be honored. Fixed office time does not change. You can park your personal vehicle where you take your postal vehicle (Milwaukee LMOU). Filling out Postal Forms is performed while on the clock. **YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO USE YOUR PERSONAL CELL PHONE!** Management is to use your phone number as an emergency contact number. Plan for the future by taking a firm grip on the present.

Article courtesy of the Milwaukee, WI *Pioneer Branch 2* published by NALC **Branch 2** in October 2014

## from the editor-guy

Some of you may know that we are **Branch 782**...

So, what does that mean? In 1901, we were the 782nd group of Letter Carriers to be granted affiliation with the *National Association of Letter Carriers*. When the NALC was birthed (above a bar in Milwaukee), the first NALC President was from Detroit, MI and Detroit was designated NALC Branch 1. Milwaukee was granted the charter as NALC Branch 2...



# Within Warren Walls

*Editor's note: the following article is reprinted from the January 1988 issue of Front Lines. While the date may have changed, the rules and the workplace conditions in Warren sadly have not. Nor has the importance of the subject matter. The stewards of 25 years ago were fighting the same battle that is going on in Warren today.*

## Carriers' Request of Form 3996

It has been widely reported to some of our Stewards that many carriers are being refused a form 3996. This is occurring when carriers are in need of assistance and/or overtime in order to complete their assignment in eight hours. It should be understood that the task of issuing a form 3996 is that of the immediate supervisor.

Our responsibility lies in the execution of the following reporting requirements as outlined in the M-41 Manual, **Section 131.4**. This section reads as follows: "It is your **(letter carrier's) responsibility to verbally inform management** when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to **case all** the mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete the delivery of all the mail."

"Inform management of this well in advance of the scheduled leaving time and not later than immediately following the final receipt of mail. Management will instruct you what to do." "Complete applicable items on Form 3996, Carrier Auxiliary Control, if overtime or auxiliary assistance is authorized in the office or on the street." As you can clearly see, the completion of the form 3996 is not necessary until the verbal information has been rendered, and a decision reached.

## Preparation of Form 3996

It has been necessary for our Stewards to file grievances in order to insure that 3996's are issued to the assistants for completion. In addition, a grievance was filed and sustained enforcing the completion of the appropriate items by the regular carrier when assistance is received. Section 280 of the M-41 Manual addresses the proper preparation of form 3996 as follows:

Complete item C, date, and D, carrier's name and route number on the form 3996. Item F, indicating the shelf or shelves for which assistance is being requested should also be completed. Item G, keys required? H, carfare re-

quired? And I, accountable mail? Should also be completed in great detail. Item K, estimated work, should be completed as listed, with an estimated figure to the best of your judgment. At this time the form should be presented to your manager.

If the assistance is approved the form should be returned to the letter carrier for completion of the route information by the carrier. This form should be initialed by the supervisor. This is done in accordance with the M-41, section 280, g. When street assistance is approved, the regular carrier shall complete items M., transportation information, N., delivery starting points, and blocks to be delivered, and O., relays. Item P., must be completed for both office and street assistance.

If overtime is approved the supervisor shall initial the form 3996m and enter their initials near the amount of overtime to be worked. The form is then filed by management.

The proper completion of the form 3996 by all concerned parties is a very important matter. All parties would include the regular carrier, manager and assistant carrier. This is a valuable source of information when processing grievances and substantiating routes which are out of adjustment.

## Reporting Requirements—Form 1571

A seldom used, but extremely important form is the **curtailment slip**. This form 1571 must be used whenever mail is curtailed or returned. The M-41 Manual, sections 131.44, 131.45 and 131.46 address this duty in detail as follows: "report on Form 1571 all mail undelivered --- including all mail distributed to the route but not cased and taken out for delivery. Estimate the number of pieces of mail."

"Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager, in which case you must record all facts on form 1571." "Before you leave the office, enter on form 1571 the mail curtailed; when you return, add any mail which was not delivered and which was returned to the office."

The form 1571 is a reporting requirement which insures self-protection of the letter carrier when there is undelivered mail. This is a form which serves to demonstrate authorized curtailment of mail matter. I implore you to utilize this form, which will only be issued upon your request in most cases.

**Ronald A. Mele**  
Chief Steward



Article courtesy of the Center Line, MI *Front Lines* published by NALC Branch 4374 in September 2014

# Thank You, Chuck!!!

I'd like to mention a sweet "Thank You to Chuck Hirl" (retired Letter Carrier from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) for getting us some closer seats while we were attending the Philllys' game. I mentioned him in a previous article in the month of August, but failed to get out a photo. "Chuck, sorry that this has taken a while to get into print and over to you. Sure did appreciate all that you had done for us! Kudos to you!"

Here is the original mention:

"The Tuesday night we were there, we were able to go to a Philly's game. Honestly, I am not a baseball fan, but I did enjoy my time there. Shari and I met a retired City Letter Carrier named Chuck Hirl. He worked out of the Philadelphia Station 19148. He was able to get us some seats closer to the batter's box. The families usually sat where we were able to sit. He mentioned to us that there were quite a few retired letter Carriers that worked at the stadium. What an awesome job to have after one retires, especially if you like baseball...!"



NORMA HAMER  
Shafter/Delano Shop Steward

## from the editor-guy

Letters. Yes, letters...

Generally, in a newsletter for *Letter Carriers*, one might assume that this is a reference to what we carry every day. Not this time.

In this instance, I'm referring to the actual letters that make up words. You may ask why. And, I'm going to tell you.

Last month, I had two **GLARING** errors that came out of my fingers on this dang keyboard and I want to make my apology in front of God, country and anybody who might open the pages of this month's edition.

### OUT THERE



I had the incorrect spelling of CCA Bryson Zuspan in a feature article. He was incorrectly identified as Bryson Zuzana. How it happened really isn't important and I want to tell you that I hope this kind of thing never happens again.

My second glaring editorial mis-step was based on a mutually acknowledged observation by the person whose name I screwed up. I am so sorry!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Gene Shebley** may not have been the only person who noticed one sentence from the article about Bill Marchand's passing. (This is *the* excerpt from the September newsletter.) "Towards the tail end of his career, Bill started walking up to deliver mail to a house and he was charged by *two* pit bulls.

He made it back to his vehicle and—as he was trying to slam the door shut—he had to kick at one of the dogs. That dog ripped his shoe off and ran back in the yard and pretended that it was one of Bill's feet. Jim Shebley got the shoe from Betty and used it to make a memento which was presented to Bill at his retirement party in 2002."

Sorry, **GENE**, I KNOW that your name isn't Jim... I really *AM* getting *old*!

And, *THAT*, is a perfect segue to something else that I want to share this month that involves letters — those things that we **DO** deliver.

After forty-seven Summers, Winters, Springs and Falls delivering letters and quite a lot more, Alex Dang decided to hang up that satchel. Ironically, even at that point in his career, Alex was still not the most senior Letter Carrier in Bakersfield. He was only #2 on the seniority list!

This is the list of the ten most senior Letter Carriers in Bakersfield on the day that Alex retired: E. Collaso (8/22/67) Dole Court; A. Dang (3/1/72) Stockdale; M. Towery (7/20/73) Dole Court; R. Trevino (7/24/78) Hillcrest; J. Absher (7/24/78) Dole Court; F. Martinez (7/24/78) Brundage; R. Courson (7/31/78) Stockdale; B. Zuniga (10/5/79) South; D. O'Neal (5/5/80) Dole Court; and, R. Cruz (6/13/80) Stockdale.

As I close, I need to tell you that I've been hanging on to a Fred Acado cartoon. I've had difficulty knowing how I would ever be able to use it in our newsletter... I hope that you won't find it offensive. Really? Yes!

But, after spending time with Alex and Maureen Dang and talking about what happens on routes, I know that—like Alex—we've **ALL** seen some variation of this cartoon's theme in the course of doing what we do...

BASIL ZUNIGA



# Branch Officers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Arvin (93203)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
Avenal (93204)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Delano (93215)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Lamont (93241)	Mike Munoz	(661) 304-5516
McFarland (93250)	Bonnie Whitbey	(661) 302-7354
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
Taft (93268)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Wasco (93280)	Joanne Layton	(661) 204-4928
Downtown Station (93301)	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
South Station (93304)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 487-5353
South Station Alternate	Judy Kiyoshi	(661) 817-5529
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar	(661) 327-7637
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Pam Smith	(661) 979-5854
Brundage Station (93307)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Dole Court (93308)	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Dole Court (93308)	Shari Sharp	(661) 364-5544
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Mojave (93501)	Vacant	
California City (93504)	Russell Day	(760) 373-8963
Boron (93516)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93523)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Ridgecrest (93555)	Lynnel Howell	(760) 382-3030
Tehachapi (93561)	Vacant	
Trona (93562)	Lynnel Howell	(760) 382-3030

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

Rick Plummer, Webmaster



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

Non-Profit Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Bakersfield, California  
 Permit Number 32

**General Meeting**  
**Tuesday**  
**October 28, 2014**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Branch 782 Office  
 2628 "F" Street  
 Bakersfield, California

**FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED**

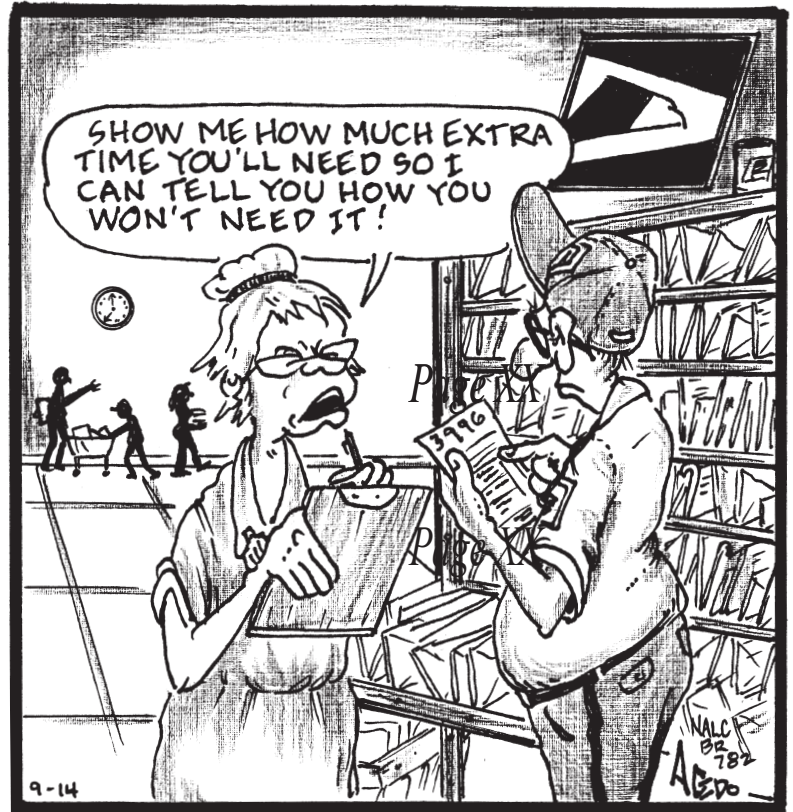
**Dang, Alex!**  
**48 years!!**

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**Branch 782**  
**Picnic Pictures**

*Page 21*

OUT THERE



**Health Benefits Open Season**

*Page 15*

Are you a reader of "the fine print"? \$500 is available for a fortunate Branch 782 member. Look for the details on page 9.