

National Association of Letter Carriers

Branch 782

E.A. Baker Union Update



ARVIN
DELANO
MOJAVE

TEHACHAPI

AVENAL
EDWARDS AFB
RIDGECREST

TRONA

BAKERSFIELD
LAMONT
SHAFTER

WASCO

BORON
McFARLAND
TAFT



VOLUME LXXXI NUMBER 8

AUGUST 2009

at the
Mike:



**So far, 2009
has been, to
say the least,
very challenging
not only for the
United States
but also for the
Postal Service,
the NALC and
also all Letter
Carriers.**

The last twelve months there has been a 5.7% reduction in career complement for the Postal Service: 37,454 employees.

- The Clerk craft took the biggest hit, losing 16,023 employees, or -8.1%.
- City carrier craft lost 11,135 positions, or -5.2%.
- Mail handlers were down 2,829, or -5 %.
- Rural carriers had the smallest decline, 974 jobs, or -1.4%.
- Supervisors, managers and administrative staffing in the field lost 3,468 jobs, or 8.4%
- Headquarters is down 88 or -3.1%

(Source: On Rolls and Paid Employee report filed by USPS with the PRC. All numbers reflect actual on rolls complement, not authorized staffing.)

During normal times the elimination of the 37, 454 Postal positions would have been enough to stabilize the costs needed to run the Postal Service. Unfortunately, as everyone is fully aware of it, these are not ordinary times. The unprecedented drop in mail volume along with the state of the economy has left the Postal Service exploring some options that previously were not given any chance of being implemented.

Of course, the most controversial option discussed is going to a five day delivery week by eliminating mail delivery on Saturday. I find it troubling that there are people in the Postal Service—both craft and management—that are making statements that are totally inaccurate or at the very least misleading and are causing undue stress and fear among a lot of the Carriers.

Continued on next page...

It is true that the Postal Service has been making plans toward eliminating Saturday delivery. Deputy Postmaster General Donohoe has been communicating with management on the Postal intranet with weekly videos of the Postal Service plans. He makes it clear that they are making these plans so that if it becomes necessary to do away with one day of delivery, they we have a lot of the details worked out so that it can be implemented as quickly as possible. He stated in his video that it could be implemented within 60 days if they got Congress to authorize it. However, the Postmaster General has stated that he wants to give six months lead time to implement it.

Locally, the Postmaster has instructed all the managers to share the videos with the union officers. In spite of this, we have had some supervisors who have stated to the employees in stand-ups that eliminating Saturday delivery is a “done deal”. The only thing this accomplishes is to put additional stress on the employees. Eliminating Saturday delivery still has to be approved through Congress.

I am confident that the national officers of the NALC will do everything possible to persuade Congress that eliminating Saturday delivery would not be in the best interests of the Postal Service, the public nor the United States.

I am confident than no matter

what happens, the national officers, led by President Rolando, will do everything possible to lessen any

adverse impact on Letter Carriers, whether they are regulars, PTF’s or TE”s.

House Republican Conference Smears America’s Most Trusted Agency

The Republican House Conference (RHC) on August 12 issued a grossly inaccurate and misleading brief insulting the Postal Service and its 700,000 employees in a transparently partisan attack aimed at derailing health reform.

The smear piece, An Ominous Model for Government Takeover of Health Care, makes at least seven false and/or misleading claims that tarnish the Postal Service and its hard-working employees. This will set the record straight.

USPS is “supposed to be” self-funded. In fact, the Postal Service is self-funded. Other than minuscule appropriations to fund free mail to the blind and military voting, the Postal Service has not received taxpayer appropriations since 1983, all the while serving 148 million addresses six days a week, including the most- expensive-to-serve rural areas in the country.

“Uncontrollable Debt” The Postal Service has a debt of \$10.3 billion to finance the operations of 37,000 post offices and the world’s largest fleet of vehicles. However, the main driver of its debt is a Bush-era policy which imposes a grossly unfair burden on USPS to prefund 80 percent of its future retiree health benefits, a 75-year liability, in just 10 years. ***No other federal agency or private company (including FedEx and UPS) faces this burden.*** Indeed, before this policy change, the USPS had a debt of zero. If not for the pre-funding requirement, the Postal Service would have earned a profit of \$2.7 billion in 2008 despite the worst recession since the Great Depression.

“Over Budget” An independent agency, USPS is off-budget and entirely self-funded. While it expects losses of \$7 billion this year, due to massive mail volume declines caused by the worst recession in 80 years, that total includes the exorbitant \$5.4 billion prefunding payment into its Retiree Health Benefit Fund (which already has \$32 billion). Recognizing USPS’s extraordinary efforts to cut costs during the crisis, 339 House Members have co-sponsored H.R. 22 to help USPS overcome the crisis by reducing the excessive burden of prefunding over the next 8 years.

“Increased Cost for Consumers” While the RHC piece notes that stamp prices have increased by 33 percent over the past 10 years, it does not mention that this increase is largely in line with inflation over the same period, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. ***Nor does it mention that private carriers (including FedEx and UPS) have increased their prices by 94 percent since 1999.***

“Lesser Quality” The ACSI survey cited—inaccurately—by the RHC represents only express delivery, not USPS’s core business.. In February,

Recently, there has been a lot of inaccurate and misleading information issued recently concerning the Postal Service. President Rolando has issued a letter (which can be found on the NALC's website www.NALC.org) setting the record straight. It is important that all Letter Carriers read his attached letter and "set the record" straight when they hear someone smear the Postal Service with inaccurate statements .

When I hear Carriers talk about how they want to eliminate Saturday delivery, I find it understandable but I also find it somewhat selfish. While it would be nice to have weekends off, I would not want Saturday off knowing that the price for it was Carriers losing their jobs, some of whom I have worked with for years..

There are a lot of issues to think about if this was implemented. The first thing I think about is all the T-6's that would no longer have an assignment.. Next, I think about all the hard working TE's that we have working for us that would probably no

longer be needed. Then, I think about the PTF carriers that would more than likely have their hours substantially reduced with little chance of making regular anytime in the near future.

One of the first issues to deal with if the T-6 positions were to be eliminated would be the implementation of Article 41.3.0 which requires the assignments junior to the Carriers whose jobs are eliminated to be posted for bid. There would be a lot of Carriers who would more than likely not get their assignment back. In addition to the disruption caused by Carriers shifting routes, there would be friction between Carriers when they are displaced by senior carriers bidding their routes. In some areas when this has occurred, Carriers have not talked to each other for years.

There are some other issues that I would hope Carriers would think about. Carriers would no longer have long weekends every sixth week as they do presently. With fewer Carriers in an office there would be fewer annual leave slots available for Carriers since a lot of the local agreements base the

number of vacation slots on a percentage of the total Carriers at a unit. Unlike now, only the most senior Carriers would probably be able to get the week of leave before a holiday. There would no longer be any assignments available in which Carriers could be detailed. Carriers who now schedule a lot of their appointments on their non-scheduled day during the week to avoid using sick leave would no longer have that option and have to take sick leave or annual leave. This would undoubtedly result in management issuing more discipline when the sick leave ratio increases. Anyone using sick leave on a Monday or Friday would probably receive additional scrutiny by management.

The September, October and November mail volume will be the deciding factor as to what is in store for the future of the Postal Service. Now is the time more for all the Carriers to stand together and not only support each other but all the national Officers of the NALC.

93 percent of customers reported satisfaction with USPS. Moreover, a Consumer Reports study recently found that the Postal Service's quality performance matched that of UPS and FedEx and at rates half those of the competition. Consumer Reports concluded, "Bottom line, all three delivered...as promised, but the good old U.S. Postal Service is often cheapest by far."

"Bailouts" The claim that USPS has been "bailed out" is patently false. The 2003 law cited by the RHC corrected a funding formula that overstated USPS's future pension obligations. Unlike private firms, USPS has fully funded its pension costs – a sign of success, not failure. The 2006 postal reform was not a bailout, either. It reformed rate-making, strengthened the Postal Regulatory Commission and locked in the unfair retiree health pre-funding schedule – costing USPS, not taxpayers, \$55 billion. To call it a "benefit bill...costing another \$1.5 billion" is dishonest.

Portion of an article written by NALC President Fred Rolando

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NALC “GOLDEN EMPIRE” BRANCH 782 DELEGATES TO THE 2010 NATIONAL CONVENTION

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the election of NALC Branch 782 delegates to the 2010 National Convention will be held at the regular Branch meeting on September 22, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office located at 2628 “F” Street, Bakersfield, California. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing to the Branch Recording Secretary within three (3) days after the nominations is made. Nominations may be submitted in writing provided that they are received by the Branch Recording Secretary prior to the closing of nominations at the regular branch meeting in September. Upon nomination, every nominee must certify that he or she has not served as a supervisor for the 24 months prior to being nominated.

By virtue of their positions, Branch 782 President and Vice President shall be delegates to the National Convention.

ELECTION

The election will be conducted by secret ballot at the regular meeting on November 24, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. at the Branch 782 Union Office, 2628 “F” Street, Bakersfield, California.

Any member who, for any reason, will be unable to vote on November 24, 2009, may obtain absentee ballots by submitting a signed written request to the Election Committee, Golden Empire Branch 782, 2628 “F” Street, Bakersfield, California 93301-1816, at least two weeks before the election. Absentee ballots must be returned to the election Committee by November 23.

Write-in votes are not permitted.

ELIGIBILITY FOR BRANCH FUNDS

Of the delegates from the Bakersfield local area selected to the National Convention, the requirements of eligibility for Convention funds will be; attendance at (10) of the twelve (12) regular General Meetings just prior to the National Convention.

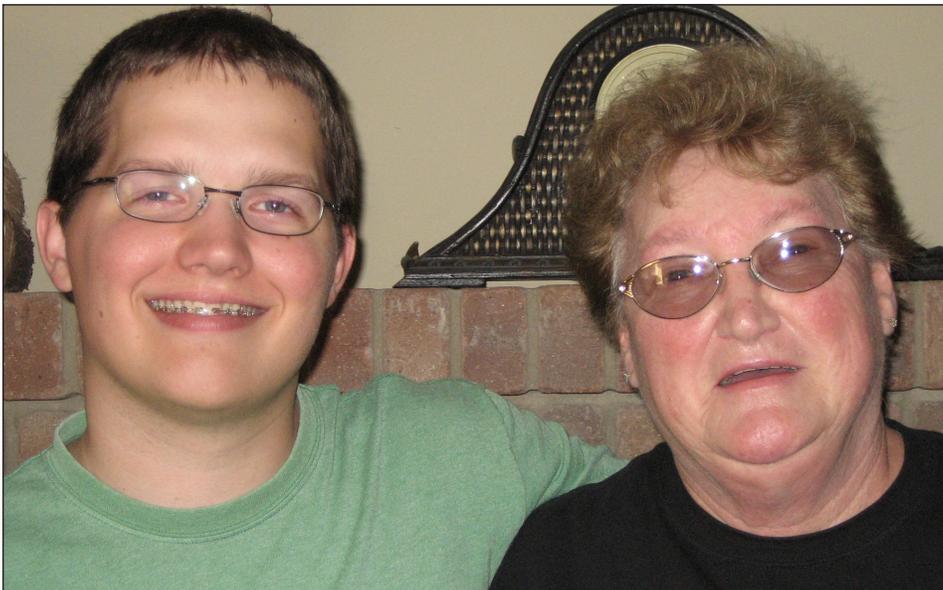
Of the delegates selected from the outlying Associate Offices (excess of thirty miles from Bakersfield), the requirements of eligibility for convention funds shall be: attendance at least two (2) meetings (any combination of regular General Meetings and/or Quarterly Area Meetings) in the twelve months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



Congratulations to Branch 782 Retiree Dicie Wilder as Grandson wins a California State Association of Letter Carriers Saxsenmeyer Scholarship!!!

Hello, My name is Cody Wilder and I am the recipient of the NALC Saxsenmeyer Scholarship. My grandmother Dicie Wilder, who is an NALC union member suggested I drop you an email since you are in charge of the newsletter. I would just like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the NALC for giving me this award! It truly means a lot and will really come in handy as the time comes to pay my tuition at USC.

Just a little background on myself - I attended Centennial High School in Bakersfield and graduated with a 4.3 GPA. I won several awards in high school including being a National Merit Commended Student, a California Scholarship Federation Gold Seal Bearer, a Golden State Merit Scholar and a recipient of the Presidential Award for Academic Excellence.



I plan on majoring in Cinema Arts and Communication at University of Southern California and will participate in their Thematic Option Honors Program. I actually began school a little early as I am currently taking a summer class in animation at USC. My hope is to one day work in film and television production. Again, I am so very grateful to have won this scholarship. I sincerely thank the union for this wonderful award.

Thank you. Please let me know if you have any questions.

CODY WILDER
(661) 587-5417

Congratulations, Cody!!!

Minutes of the June 2009 General Meeting

The regular meeting of Branch 782 was called to order by President, Mike Towery at 7:00 p.m. on July 28, 2009 at the branch office, Bakersfield. The flag salute was led by Sgt. At Arms, Jerry Patterson. All members of the Executive Board were present. Also attending the meeting was Newsletter Editor, Basil Zuniga, Asst. Editor, Jason Munoz, Emma Gonzales of the Social and Recreation Committee, and Photographer, Anita Holderman. The Stewards were present from Arvin, Brundage, Camino Media, Delano, Downtown, E. B., Lamont, Oildale, Shafter, South Station, Stockdale and Wasco. The minutes of the June 23, 2009 meeting were accepted as read with no additions or corrections.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP: An application was received from Bill Maggio and Alice Shultz. Reports of Standing and Special Committees: Teresa Espinoza reported that the Picnic "is a long way away", the date for the picnic cannot be booked before January. Basil Zuniga reported that the folding a stapling of the newsletter went well. Traditionally very few members from Brundage attend, but this time there was a great turnout thanks to Shop Steward Mabel Bullis who has done a lot at Brundage Station to encourage the carriers and lift moral and

station pride. Emma Gonzales reported that the Social and Recreation Committee has tickets for Disney on Ice, Oct. 1, for \$10., and tickets to the Sept. 22 game with the Dodgers vs. the Giants.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Mike Towery reported that the By-Laws changes were accepted by National.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION: CSALC President, John Beaumont and NBA Manny Peralta will be attending the August 25, 2009 meeting to present the Saxenmier Scholarship. John Ortega reported that MIRAP is winding down. They are working on Palmdale using CORS. All routes have to be adjusted by August 31st. We will begin collection data again in September. Approximately 15 routes have been taken from the city. The number of withheld positions has gone from 20 to 2. Basil Zuniga read an article from the Columbus, OH newsletter regarding the FSS (Flat sorting system). Bill Curtis discussed the newsletter. He feels that it is better than any other newsletter he has seen. We have a gifted artist who does the cartoons. He encourage everyone to "enjoy the newsletter while you can, Basil and Fred will not be here forever." Basil explained how he takes the extra newsletter to the convention and has our delegates pass them out at the convention.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION: Mike Towery reported that a decision was reached on an Arbitration regarding a removal. The carrier has returned to work. Mike thanked Mike Meza for volunteering to handle a grievance in Visalia, which he settled.

OUT THERE



FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: Anita Holderman reported that \$13,245.54 was collected for the month of July.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Molly Biggar reported:

Beginning Balance	\$59,648.99
Dues and Income	\$12,656.76
Interest Income	\$ 13.07
Total Balance	\$72,318.82
Expenses	\$12,286.57
Ending Balance	\$60,032.25

The MDA 50/50 Drawing was won by Mabel Bullis.

The Drawing for \$100.00 would have been won by Rick Skinner if he had been present.

There were 30 members present.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

KIM GERDES

DOWNTOWN STATION

Dale Pearce
Javier Cruz

SOUTH STATION

100% Union!!!

EAST BAKERSFIELD

100% Union!!!

HILLCREST

100% UNION!!!

BRUNDAGE

David Kinglee

DOLE COURT

100% Union!!!

STOCKDALE

Ron Huston
James Oh
G.S. Saran

CAMINO MEDIA

F. Medina, Jr.

ARVIN

100% Union!!!

AVENAL

100% UNION!!!

NON-MEMBER LIST

August 2009

BORON

100% Union!!!

CALIFORNIA CITY

100% Union!!!

DELANO

C. V. Quebral
L. A. Campos

EDWARDS

100% Union!!!

LAMONT

100% Union!!!

McFARLAND

100% Union!!!

MOJAVE

100% Union!!!

RIDGECREST

S. R. Pierce
H. G. Blanco
T. K. Miller
R. M. Noke

SHAFTER

L. M. New
M. D. Voights

TAFT

B. W. Krier
K. J. Hughes

TEHACHAPI

V. L. Johnson

TRONA

S. L. Walent
B. R. Dame
K. K. Treat

WASCO

100% Union!!!

Basil, 416 of the 439 craft employees in cities we serve are NALC members! We have achieved a total of 94.7%.

*Submitted by KIM GERDES
Branch 782 Recording Secretary*

Darryl's Q&A???

QUESTION: Recently, our station underwent some major route adjustments. Territory was shifted around. The station manager, at a standup, told all the Carriers not to take the time to make sure that addressed circulars were given to the Carrier who had received the new territory. He said (quote): "Just deliver one to an address." I guess this meant that we no longer have to worry about whether or not we are misdelivering circulars. This doesn't seem right to me. What do you think?

ANSWER: Well, the manager *is* within his rights to tell you to do this. As long as you are not placing yourself in an unsafe situation which might result in injury, you are required to follow the order and then grieve. However...let's take a look at just one of the ramifications.

If a mailer pays for us to deliver their addressed mailing to the proper addresses, the Postal Service should provide the service that they have paid for. If the mailer doesn't get that service, why shouldn't they just hire Billy Bob and his cousins, or another competitor, to just deliver those circs instead of us?

The *only* thing that the Postal Service has to offer is service. Why would a manager do something which would have us provide a bad product to our consumers? It just doesn't seem right to me, either. What's *his* boss think????

DARRYL HOLDERMAN
Branch 782 Vice-President

August, 2009 Postal Record, pa.13. "Quality, Affordable Health Care for All" "Don't Tax Our Health Care"....

Union, dues paying Letter Carriers must HATE their Health Care that we have worked for and earned! Why are Union leaders out picketing for something that we already have? I like my health care and we're going to lose it if these people succeed at what they're doing! First of all, Quality, affordable health care costs \$\$\$.

Letter Carriers pay for their H.C. through deductions from their pay that they work their asses off for! In 2007 the government took \$776.59 from my pay to fund Medicare, so we're already being taxed! If the government votes itself more power to control our H.C., then WE WILL PAY MORE! An additional tax on the wealthiest 1.2 percent of Americans will NOT be nearly enough to cover this latest government largesse! (welfare) Look at the track record of those who are now telling us that "their plan would be fully paid for through increased efficiencies and savings in Medicare and Medicaid"?? Both of these programs are Trillions of dollars in debt because everything that the government takes control of is grossly mismanaged! We'll end up in the same mess as Chrysler and GM as well as our banks, insurance companies, power companies all while our government spending is completely out-of-control!

The Union, that is supposed to represent Letter Carriers, has been pressing for Universal, government controlled H.C. We're assured, by the same people who promised more jobs along with no new taxes on the "middle-class", that our H.C. benefits will not be taxed and that we get to keep our great H.C.!

There are plans to ELIMINATE employer coverage as soon as a decade or 15 or 20 years from now. That means total government controlled H.C.. with no recourse to viable competition as we have now. Currently, under the FEHBP, we have a CHOICE of plans to best serve our families. Why is the Union

hell-bent on destroying our choices for private H.C.???? If they were really concerned about the "45 Million" (including foreign nationals here ILLEGALLY) it's very simple! Just reform the Medicare/Medicaid programs to accommodate legal citizens that cannot afford private H.C. using means testing to determine their share-of-cost. We will NEVER have enough \$\$\$ to cover every living being, not without complete GOVERNMENT CONTROL! Most citizens of the U.S.A. work for and pay for their own families H.C. either through a employer coverage or individual policy or pay cash. There's no logical reason to force U.S. into a one-size-fits-all government controlled program when the majority is taking care of it's own business.

Some examples of government H.C.: OWCP/DOL. Anyone who has dealings with these people know that it is a NIGHTMARE! The shortest wait that I've had was 3 MONTHS for approval. Then, after getting their approval, after filling out several forms, doctor's visits, and a lawyer like write-up there's further approval needed for each procedure and/or treatment. Without my private H.C., Kaiser Permanente, I would've never been able to receive care or treatment for work related injuries. On several occasions I had to get help from our local congressman, Bill Thomas and currently, Kevin McCarthy. I've had dealings with the VA that also had similar requirements for excessive paperwork, limited facilities and means tested share-of-cost payments. Government is nothing more than another obstacle in the road to an injured/sick person getting the medical care/treatment that is needed; that the working person has worked to EARN! If there's citizens of America that need government help to get H.C. let them apply for it and the ever generous Democrats (with our tax \$\$) can alter current government controlled programs to provide it.

LEAVE U.S. ALONE! STOP FORCING YOUR CONTROL ON U.S.!



BILL CURTIS
Branch.782 Trustee

What does our future hold?

I began my career in the late 80's. Some of you were already here and many more of you arrived later. The Postal Service looked much different then and it will change more in the future.



Danny Lujan on his last day of carrying mail!

the work room floor. The mail processing centers have reduced their staffing as they cannot keep the machines busy 24 hours a day.

Our business is a service to America. That is our mission and that mission is spelled out in the US Constitution. In December of 2002, President Bush issued an executive order to study the survivability of the Post Office into the internet age. America spoke up and they overwhelmingly said that they love their letter carrier. That love protected us from much of the harm that might otherwise have become law.



Danny Lujan enjoys some time off while serving as delegate to the 1992 NALC National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri



I say this to remind us all that the work we do day in and day out is a privilege that should not be taken for granted.



The better we serve the American public, then longer they will protect us and stand up for us. Do your best. Do it with a smile.

Fred Rolando, our new President, is prepared to take on any challenge to our survival. You should prepare to do the same. Be safe and remember, while we lose routes other



industries are closing their doors. While my route and your may be added to, we are not in the unemployment line. We will make it through these tough times and we will be proud. Don't let management cause you to fear that we will not make it.

On a lighter note, Dan Lujan retired on July 31, with 38 years of service. I can imagine the changes he has seen. Way to go, Dan!! The Hillcrest gang wishes you a long and happy retirement!

A rah-rah-rah to the Hillcrest softball team, for their heroic efforts, and to Ronnie Mireles who was sidelined but came out to cheer on the team!

PAM SMITH
93306 Shop Steward

2009 NALC HBP Info

NALC Health Benefit Plan	1-888-636-6252
*Hospital Pre-Certification	1-877-220-6252
*** Mental & Substance Precert.	1-877-468-1016
Drug Prescription Retail	1-800-933-6252
CareMark Hearing Impaired	1-800-238-1217
*** CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
*** Durable Medical Eqpt.	1-888-636-6252
CareMark Specialty Pharmacy	1-800-237-2767
Durable Medical Equipment	1-888-636-6252
Nurse Assistant (24/7)	1-877-220-6252
CareMark Pharmacist	1-888-636-6252
Enhanced Eldercare Services (24/7)	1-877-468-1016
CIGNA PPO Dr's & Facilities	1-877-220-6252
***CIGNA Transplant Approval	1-800-668-9682
Quest Diagnostics (Lab Services)	1-877-220-6252
Quit Power (Smoking Cessation)	1-877-784-8797
CIGNA Health Rewards (Discounts)	1-800-870-3470
CIGNA Dental Discount Program	1-877-521-0244
**** Disease Management Program	1-800-227-3728
MEDICARE Managed Care Plan	1-800-633-4277
OPM Retirement Info Center	1-888-767-6738
Federal Information Center	1-800-688-9889
Social Security Administration Info	1-800-772-1213

* Failure to pre-certify will result in a \$500 reduction in benefits paid by the Plan. Must notify the Plan prior to hospital admission with doctor name and dates. ** Mail order drug prescription program long term (maintenance drugs) 60 day supply: \$8 generic, \$24 name brand; 90 day supply: \$12 generic, \$35 name brand. Retail Pharmacy, you pay 25% . MEDICARE 60 day supply: \$7 generic, \$20 name brand; 90 day supply: \$10 generic, \$30 name brand. Network Retail Pharmacy you pay 15% of the cost of the prescription. Prior approval required for some drugs. Must call the Plan. *** **Prior Approval Required.** **** Asthma and Diabetic.



Branch 782 Health Benefit Representative



**Mark
Ramirez**
(661) 834-5011

NALC Health Benefit Plan
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, VA 20149

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

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

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

Preferred Provider (PPO)
Cost: \$15.00
Co-pay per office visit

Preferred Provider (PPO)
Deductible
\$250 Individual
\$500 Self & Family
Per Calendar Year

Contact Information

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

Get the Chumps Back in Uniform!!!

Last month, an anonymous letter writer asked the postmaster a question, and the postmaster responded. If you review the question and its response, you will find that although the response from the postmaster is well thought out, it doesn't answer the question.

Over the last two months, the harmony of some of our local carriers has been disrupted by carriers and supervisors from other areas, and even though they avoided going through proper channels, and even though local supervisors have themselves broken some of our most important safety rules, they have experienced no consequences for their actions; this speaks directly to the anonymous question, and it is important that it is answered directly.

Since last month, I have talked, in short, to carriers at my station who have been flagged down by postal employees, some in marked vehicles, some not, who have represented themselves without rank. They never said they were supervisors, but their manner was one of superiority, and derision. They would question the safety practices of the carriers, often referencing things that happened a half an hour or more previously, some carrying binoculars. Should the carrier argue, they would respond with agitation, and threaten the carrier with discipline. What they never said, and what is so pertinent, is that they were carriers, who had been given non-labor positions with district, and were now poaching unfamiliar members of their own craft, with no real authority.

These were people who were either unwilling or unable to do the job that you do every day, and they were self-righteous and indignant in telling you how to do it. Of course it took more than a week for it to be realized that they could not, and did not have the authority, to discipline carriers. For every one of the carriers involved that I've spoken to, that was a stress-filled week. For those who remember the local DSI program from about a year ago, you may find some similarities, and you are not wrong.

In response to the revelation that these disciplinary actions were not able to be enforced, they decided to send supervisors to observe our local carriers, presumably with the same ethics, or lack thereof. They made a mistake, yet rather than admit that, they compound it with a prideful repeat mistake. I keep hearing at stand-ups that the post office is in a delicate economic state, yet they waste resources on empty pride. I know that safety is important, but I have a hard time believing that that is the entirety of their motivation. This is a clear attempt to assert dominance, in the primitive sense. The contract is

clear enough for anyone to read, and it binds us both, but they only get upset when it is enforced on them.

According to the letter sent by anonymous, during the same period, a supervisor was witnessed to have locked his keys in the company vehicle while it was running, it was seen by several people, and he had to get the spare keys from the station to unlock it. Upon further investigation, I have heard, purely rumor you understand, that this unnamed supervisor is one of the most strict, having been known to write up a carrier for unapproved overtime over a single click. He, unsurprisingly, received no discipline; Which leads me back to the letter.

The question that anonymous asked was, and I'm paraphrasing, "is there a double standard regarding the disciplining of carriers and supervisors?" To give a shorter, less eloquent, but more correct answer than the postmaster, yes. There has to be. Given the relationship between different levels of management, it is required. The postmaster cannot be everywhere at once, so he must have reliable supervisors. In order to do so, he must cultivate trust and loyalty in them. It's the smart thing to do, and in the long run, it lowers the general stress level in stations, and beyond.

The important thing to understand is that the stress-inducing discipline that anonymous was concerned with came from the district, by those panicked individuals who were desperate to prove their worth in a time of cost-cutting. These individuals fear nothing so much as obsolescence, except maybe honest work. What we must now work toward is exactly what they want, although they don't know why they want it, and wouldn't know what to do if they got it, like a dog chasing a car.

I won't tell you how to do your job, you know that well enough, but I will outline one shining and glorious reason to do it by the letter. Supposing we give them exactly what they appear to want. Where does that leave them? If there was no one left to police, what good are the police? If everyone did their route proudly and properly to the letter, these guys would have nowhere to go but back to work. Let's do what we got to do to get these chumps back in a uniform, and to let district know who we are and what we are capable of.

JASON MUNOZ
Dole Court

August 2009 General Membership Meeting Drawing

\$150

There is one "catch"... You have to be present to win.

from the
editor-guy

Without a doubt, “the times they are a’changing”...

The USPS is in the midst of uncharted waters. Many of us are adapting to “new and improved” routes. Others are worried if they are going to be working tomorrow. And we continue to hear about even more and more changes on the horizon.

Well, as I looked at these pictures I suddenly realized something. If you’re here long enough, you become part of the changes and don’t realize how much things have changed.

Case in point: Thirty years ago, pictures of the Post Office softball tournament would have had no women in the pictures.

I spoke to someone about this and mentioned that, thirty years ago, there would also have been a keg of beer somewhere. He smiled and said that there *had* been a keg...

Somehow, the more things change, the more they seem to stay the same.

Anyway, enjoy the pictures. Thank Anita Holderman and her family for them!

BASIL ZUNIGA









More pictures? See them on the next page...



And, now...some pictures from Brundage!!



Thank you for the pictures go to Mabel Bullis, Brundage Shop Steward!!!

News from the Hill.

We had a party for Dan Lujan on Saturday August 1st, at Don Perico's, to celebrate his many years with the Postal Service. Dan and his wife Rosie were joined by 20 of his family members and our usual party group. The party was lots of fun and Dan says he will miss all of us. He will also miss his customers. He has always felt service to his customers was the most important thing.



Dan's service to the Post Office combined with his service to our country in the Army, total over 40 years. He was in the Army for three years as an E4. Then he started at the Post Office. He started at the Annex on California Ave and then came to Hillcrest. He moved around some but always came back to Hillcrest. In 1983 he moved to Salinas and had a few different routes, but came back to Bakersfield in 1990.



While he's been at Hillcrest he's had 3 routes and a T6 position.

Dan has always been involved in the union. He was the Treasurer for a while and did the newsletter in Salinas.

One thing Dan says he really enjoyed was traveling around to different AO Stations with Mark Ramirez, back in the early 90's. They were there to implement vertical flats. When he was an OJI trainer, he started a training program for new Carriers. This program extended the training time, so that the Carriers weren't just thrown out there after a few hours.



At Dan's party he reflected on a few highlights of his career.

He—like most of us—had his share of naked ladies coming to the door, and dogs chasing him and a few catching him.

But one of his favorite memories was of his customers giving him things for his daughter's birth many years ago. Many of us at the party had never heard Dan talk so much. Now that he is retired he wants to travel. One of his favorite places is Las Vegas.



So Dan, we all wish you a great retirement and lots of luck with those slot machines.

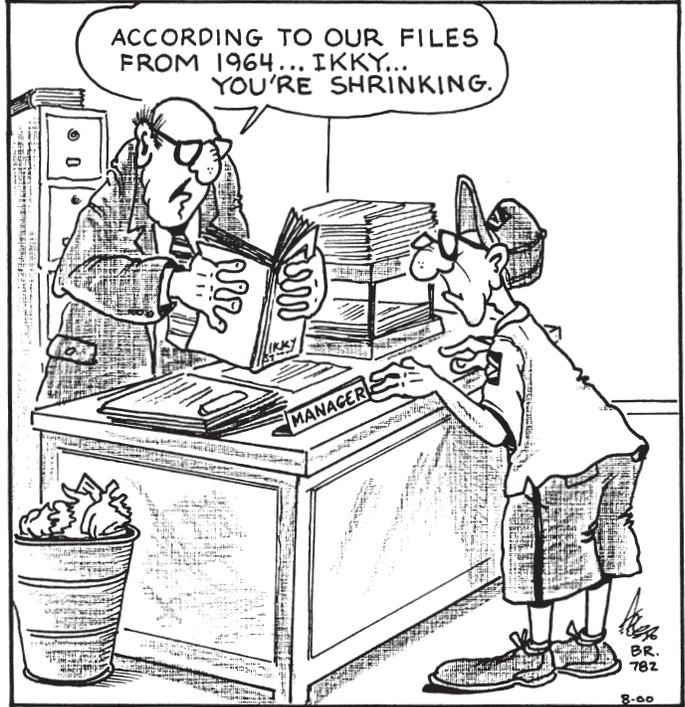


You will be missed, but remember you still have a place saved for you at the Saturday breakfast club. You were a great Carrier and role model for the newbies.

DEBBIE WILLIAMS
Hillcrest Station



OUT THERE



Over 40 Years of Federal Service!!

A Guest Editorial

Five Day Delivery? Who Cares and Why?

By Ronald Troum
Retired member of Branch 2550

The subject has been talked about for eons. Too much if you ask me, and it should have been laid to rest eons ago. Some of us think "Oh Yeah" when told about five day delivery for the Postal Service. They figure Saturday and Sundays off forever "Hooray". Yes, it could be weekends off. But, I guarantee it won't last forever. Or even your career. That is if you actually have a career to look forward to.

Most of this piece is my thoughts and rants about 5 day delivery. Something about this subject just didn't sit right with me. On the surface it makes perfect sense. One less day to pay overtime. No more Carrier Technician pay rates (won't need T-6's with 5 day delivery). And a huge savings would be the gas saved from our trucks and vans sitting idle one day a week. No mail on weekends or any five day a week schedule just seems too good to be true! And it is. For the United States Postal Service anyway.

NALC is absolutely against cutting out one day of delivery. Congress is against it also. I sure don't always agree with all that comes down from Washington, but I'm in 100% agreement on this subject. Eliminate one day of delivery and you are cutting service to the customers that pay our wages. We would only hurt the consumer, who in turn would turn away proportionately from USPS and use a competitor. It's not just mail, it's parcels, express mail and other services.



But think about it...

Why would Postmaster Potter and the Board of Governors want to cut one day of delivery? My opinion is that it's the easy way out and very short sighted. *It will kill the*

Postal Service eventually.

We always hear about the labor costs involved in running the Post Office. Around 80% of every dollar we take in goes to labor costs last time I heard. So the obvious solution is to ...um....cut labor costs right? I can buy into that. But where do you cut?

Cut the service? We are bare bones service now! We offer very little extra to satisfy our customers and what little there is to offer extra is supplied by...yours truly the LETTER CARRIERS! So cut the Carrier workforce? Eliminate the face customers see every day? Well, 6 days a week?

Hey, let's eliminate stamp machines. Oops, we already did that and it isn't helping.

Our upper management who, in a normal company atmosphere would be called executives, have to protect their jobs. That is where the waste is.

What we need right now is to let letter carriers and clerks take care of the public. "Exceed Expectations". That should be our slogan. I was always taught to do that in the work I did before joining the Post Office. Let the service people connect and SERVE the public. "Good Morning, this is Fort Lauderdale post office where the customer comes first. Really? Puuleaze. Who are we kidding when we say that? What moron decided that slogan would "fix" the USPS's problems? That's just lip service. It only makes a mockery of the service that Letter Carriers try to give.

Face it, in the USPS atmosphere customers do NOT come first. Numbers, goals, budgets and management bonuses come first.

Our USPS has invented jobs for management and "executives". This in the face of service cuts and budget shortfalls. One manager per station. Ok. But if they run the station then why is there a need for two more layers above them in every city (Postmasters and Area Managers)? This is not to say any particular boss is not doing their job. But some of those jobs are totally meaningless and excess to the business. Sitting on a conference call for three hours a day. That makes fiscal sense right?

Remember, Fort Lauderdale is not a very large city so can you imagine how much management fat there is in bigger cities? Miami? New York? Los Angeles? Chicago? So multiply whatever our top executives in

Fort Lauderdale make by 100? 1,000? How many bigger cities than Fort Lauderdale are there? And lest anyone think I am trashing anyone in Fort Lauderdale, I am not. It is the only city that I worked in and thus know the logistics of. Again, I cannot judge who is doing a good job or not. Heck, that's not my job. But there is a way to look up the salaries of every person that works for the USPS and that is what really made my hair fall out. Ok, it fell out before that but that's another story.

<http://php.app.com/usps/search.php> This is the website where you can find any postal workers' salary in the country. Even your own. And, yes, even our wonderful Postmaster General. I'll save you time on that one. \$265,000 before any other "perks" and fringe benefits.

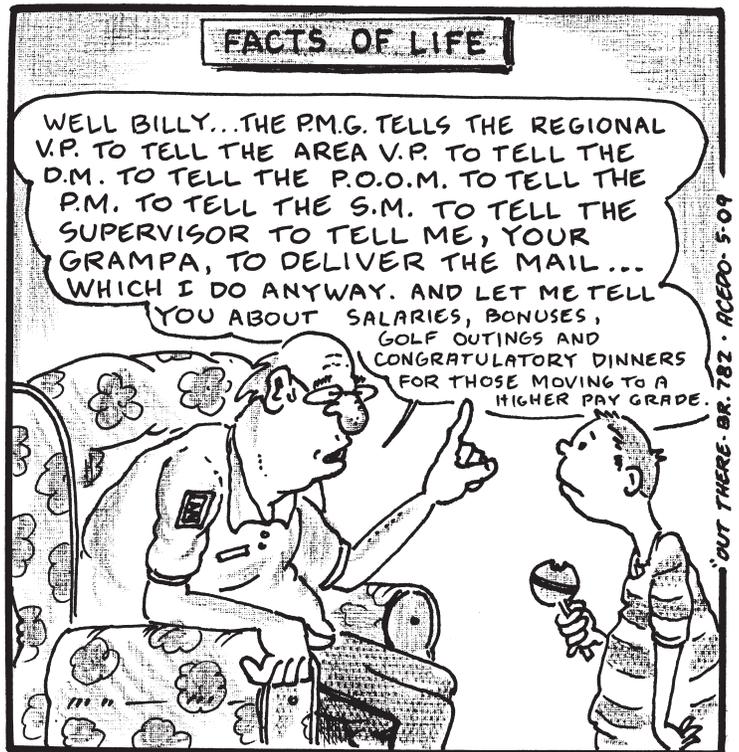
There are around 25,219 Postmasters throughout the United States. 395 are in Florida alone. There are 5 Postmasters in Broward County! Even Postmasters that oversee one, that's right ONE station. And in Broward county those Postmasters have a combined salary of more than \$525,000 (sources, USPS.com and php.app.com/usps/search.php.) From the research I have done using the previously mentioned sources I calculate close to \$2 million dollars in management salaries in Fort Lauderdale alone, and that does not include any zone supervisors! I think I know where we can save money. Duh!

We take stamps out of the lobby and hurt our service. Grievances are paid everyday to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars nationwide. Now we are consolidating post offices. But what happens to the managers of the lost offices? Heck, they can go out on a route inspection detail. (I won't even tell you about the one manager doing route inspections at a cost of \$81,000 a year because he/she couldn't manage a station! Oops, I just did.)

And in Denver, Colorado the cash-strapped Postal Service spent an estimated \$50-250,000 to prosecute a clerk for stealing \$78! The jurors even chuckled that they would take up a collection and give the \$78 to the post office so they could just go home. Guess what? The clerk was innocent on every count she was charged with. (source TheDenverchannel.com)

So where is the waste in the USPS? It is in the top half of the labor field. People paid to talk on the phone. Paid to find ways to beat lower employees like dogs for more productivity. My idea? Start by cutting, or enticing into retirement at least 50 postmasters nationwide. That ought to save around \$4 million right off the bat. Cut the heavy fat from the top and this organization will start to flourish. I betcha (that's my Palin Drome).

Every postal employee should be watching one particular bill that is moving through Congress. That bill would be H.R. 22. In a nutshell what H.R. 22 provides is a reduction in the amount the USPS has to pay into the Postal Service Retiree Benefits Fund. As it stands right now the postal service has to pay in 5.5 billion dollars annually to fund retiree health benefits in the future. This is on top of the 2-3 billion dollars it pays each year for current retiree benefits. This was all brought about by the legal require-



ment that the USPS pay 80% of its future retiree benefits by the year 2016.

This was a result of the 2006 Postal Reorganization that took place. Nobody knew a big recession would change the economics of the country in 3 years. H.R. 22 would let the USPS pay off these benefits on a more reasonable schedule (kind of like refinancing your home) and save it 3.5 billion a year for the next 3 years. Originally, it was over 8 years but compromising is getting the Bill done faster and on more solid ground. Thus there are 339 sponsors. Oh, this is not in any way a "bail out". Nobody is giving us money.

Anyway if the Bill passes—and it looks like it will—eventually, USPS and all of us can breathe a sigh of relief. For awhile.

The Postal Service is still projecting a 1.5 billion dollar shortfall this year. Maybe somewhere Postmaster Potter or the Board of Governors or OIG, or whoever it takes will see that there are a lot of highly paid "executives" that are not essential to delivering mail. In fact, they are detrimental to customer service in that all they see is DOIS, percent to standard etc. and customers be damned!

So, to all the dedicated workers at the United States Postal Service: Keep on doing your thing because you are the ones holding this organization together. All carriers, (TE's included), clerks, mail handlers, maintenance etc.....**YOU** are the soul of this organization. It would have tanked a long time ago if not for our efforts and the efforts of the NALC and sister unions.

Hopefully better days lie ahead, six days a week.

From Brundage

I want to thank everyone who participated in this on-going effort of trying to keep fit. The winners of the May, June, July "Biggest Loser" are: 1st Place goes to Laura Gordon of Dole Court Station. She was also the 1st month winner. Laura had a total loss of 13.42%, winning a grand total of \$437.50.

2nd Place goes to Maria Gutierrez of Brundage Station. She was also our 2nd month winner. Maria had a total loss of 13.90%. winning a grand total of \$162.50/

Not bad for putting in \$25!

I want to mention that Ruben Gonzalez

got dedicated late in the game but he lost an amazing 33 pounds in the last month and-a-half (12.5% loss). He and his wife, Amanda, are both making changes happen! She, too, lost a huge amount of weight they both started together.

That's what happens when you team up with someone.... And, now, we proudly announce the latest—

Brundage Biggest Loser: TWISTER!!!

Of the 24 competitors who signed up to lose weight (May, June, July), amazingly enough, "Mr. Slim Trim" has now reached a total of 392 pounds. It is well worth all my time and energy to get this sort of competition going to try to keep it going. Losing weight is not all about looking pretty on the outside, it is way more than that! When you look good on the outside, you feel good on the inside. It's not all about being vain. The two are connected. You shine so much that everyone can see it a mile away. Some people joined this competitions for health reasons and some joined for the challenge. Having some sort of motivation or incentive to lose extra pounds is always a bonus. Well, with that said, here is a twister to a new competitor that we want to kick off the New Year!

"Couple Edition"

Starting Friday, January 1, 2010 we will begin our new journey with team competitions. Money is always a motivator in any situation, but now you can get **DOUBLE MOTIVATION** with a partner to win the money. A Postal employee has to be one of the participants but the partner can be anyone: a spouse, a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or even another Postal employee.

Rules. There are going to be rules. So far, everyone has been satisfied with all the rules that have been applied. If there is anything I have missed, please let me know. The buy-in is still \$25 person, \$50 per team. Monies must be given to me at time of weigh-in.

Here are the "fine print" rules:

1) The beginning weigh-in date is **ON** Friday, January 1, 2010. There will be no exceptions; 2) The 2nd month weight date is **ON** Monday, February 1, 2010; 3) The 3rd month weigh-in is **ON** Wednesday, March 31, 2010; This will be a combined weight loss percentage of all three months of both partners. There will be a 1st place winner of 75% and 2nd place team winner of 25% of the remaining pot; 5) To be fair, we are mimicking the BIGGEST LOSER Series. We are doing this on the honor system. No pills, surgery or other doohickery—just old fashioned hard work of eating right and exercise. Just like the series, each person of the team is weighed individually and the percentage of weight loss is calculated each as an individual. After both members are weighed, their percentages are added together and that is the team percentage weight loss.

For entertainment purposes: *The weigh-in dates have to be on or before the dates listed. If something impedes your ability to be at Brundage Station for the weigh-in days, you will not be eligible for any possible winnings.* If you know you will not be available on a weigh-in date, you may weigh in prior to those dates and you will still be eligible for the winnings. The reasoning for this new rule is that towards the end, I only had 8 people weigh in. It is not fair or fun to those who participate all the way through to those who don't. Everyone likes to know who their challengers are not be in the dark until the end. This also helps keep the competition positive as well as keep motivation high.

Remember, in our first competition, one of the skinniest competitors ended up winning (losing 15 pounds *less* than the 2nd pound winner). Good Luck! Have Fun! Lose weight safely and motivate your partner! They may need it more than you. You are in it together!

MABEL BULLIS
Brundage Shop Steward



Branch Officers

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

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

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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).

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

J. Munoz, Assistant Editor
(661) 325-5526

The "S.A.N.E."*
Fred Acedo, Cartoonist
*(Special Assistant Newsletter Editor)
P.O. Box 6532
Bakersfield, CA 93386-6532

Anita Holderman, Branch Photographer
(661) 589-1683

**Branch 782
Website**

www.782nalc.com

Rick Plummer

webmaster@www.782nalc.com

President	Mike Towery	(661) 331-9171
Vice-President	Darryl Holderman	(661) 589-1683
Recording Secretary	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
Treasurer	Molly Biggar	(661) 832-0393
Financial Secretary	Anita Holderman	(661) 589-1683
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NALC Branch 782 Shop Stewards

Avenal (93203)	Vacant	
Arvin (93209)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Delano (93215)	Jerry Patterson	(661) 599-6859
Lamont (93241)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 589-1683
McFarland (93250)	Robert Campos	(661) 805-1034
Shafter (93263)	Norma Hamer	(661) 619-1465
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Wasco (93280)	Mabel Lyons	(661) 900-8892
Downtown Station (93301)	Kim Gerdes	(661) 834-2059
South Station (93304)	Darryl Holderman	(661) 589-1683
South Station Alternate	Bonita Lewis	(661) 589-1683
East Bakersfield (93305)	Paul Salazar	(661) 327-7637
Hillcrest Station (93306)	Pam Smith	(661) 979-5854
Brundage Station (93307)	Mabel Bullis	(661) 496-5679
Brundage Station Alternate	Emma Gonzalez	(661) 834-8658
Dole Court (93308)	Mike Towery	(661) 862-8033
Dole Court Alternate	Teresa Ortega	(661) 201-3086
Stockdale Station (93309)	Randy Courson	(661) 345-0256
Stockdale Station (93309)	John Ortega	(661) 809-8140
Camino Media (93311/13)	Mike Meza	(805) 625-4541
Camino Media Alternate	Gina Garcia	(661) 809-8016
Mojave (93501)	Vacant	
California City (93504)	Paula Hogg	(760) 373-8963
Edwards AF Base (93526)	Larry Beem	(661) 949-2280
Tehachapi (93561)	Mary Morphis	(661) 822-6614
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Please note: Meeting Time has changed...

