

# National Association of Letter Carriers

## Branch 782

# E.A. Baker Union Update



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**CHARTERED FEBRUARY 25, 1901**

**SPECIAL EDITION**

**MARCH 2017**

Memoria in  
aeterna

## Jesse "Chusie" Avalos

September 12, 1938 – March 9, 2017

*Additional details on pages 20 - 21...*

It is right, and it is proper, that we honor and remember those who have gone before us.

Chusie was an NALC member for some sixty years! His wife, Mary Lou, knows much about

his time as a Letter Carrier. This tribute is to help you know better how he fit into the history of the NALC Branch 782 family that you, too, are a part of.



***For a quick summary, see the back cover...***

***“Hi, Basil. This is Paul Salazar. I was told that Jesse Avalos passed away yesterday. Just thought you might want to know in case you want to include something about it in the newsletter.”***

**N**ot the kind of text that I enjoy getting.

As I recall, “Chusie” was a pretty feisty and scrappy guy. He wasn’t afraid to mix it up with management, other Carriers, or customers when he wanted to get his point across.

The picture to the right shows him with then-national NALC Vice President Tony Huerta who was also ever ready to go to bat for what he believed in.



When my postal career began in 1979, Jesse was the Branch 782 Vice-President. And, I got to know him — *or so I thought*. As with each of us, we are so much more than appears at first glance...

He became a Letter Carrier shortly after graduating from Bakersfield



High School in 1956. He then began what was supposed to be a two year enlistment in the U.S. Army in 1959. But he wasn’t discharged until 1962 due to a “Berlin Wall involuntary extension” while stationed in Germany. At the end of his time,

he was able to return to his postal job because absence had been due to a military service.

(I didn’t know anything about that as his “history” or why we called him what we did. To this day there seems to be some mystery about how “Chusie” became his name. *That’s just what he was called.*)

Mary Lou Ruiz *did* know who he was and what he was called! Her older brother had married Jesse’s younger sister, but she didn’t think that Chusie even knew her.



Well..

Apparently, he did. After Mary Lou graduated from high school in 1962, they were married on December 28, 1963.

Their first home was an apartment close to 8th and Union Avenue. Jesse delivered mail all day and then he took night classes to earn an AA degree from Bakersfield College thanks to the G.I. Bill.

Busy in other ways, Jesse and Mary Lou welcomed a son, Victor Jesse (“V.C.”) on August 1, 1964. He was followed in due course by siblings Derrek on July 25, 1967; Tommy on June 2, 1970; and, Sonja on January 28, 1977.

His participation in the NALC was birthed when a Letter Carrier friend, Art Bermudez, got into some kind of trouble.



**The Branch 782 Executive Board in the Winter of 1983**

(l-r) Basil Zuniga, Frank Thomasy, Mark Ramirez, John Ross, Vice-President Jesse Avalos, President Tony Chavez, Linda King, George White, Mary Bryant and John Wonderly.

Jesse wanted to help him out and learned that becoming active in the Union would be a good start. Jesse soon found himself a Shop Steward.

Mary Lou wanted to be supportive of what he was doing and became active in the NALC Auxiliary along with Ann Suniga, Mary Ross and others. They formed life-long friendships together through this.

Chusie's active participation as an officer of Branch 782 ended in 1984 when he was promoted to a USPS management position as a maintenance supervisor. However, while he was no longer a Letter Carrier, he remained an NALC member for the rest of his life.

There were many people in Jesse's life that were life-long friends. Fred Castro and been his friend since



Jesse Avalos, Tony Chavez and George White

Kindergarten. (At the viewing, Fred shared a humorous memory of one of their adventures when they were young teens. It may not surprise some to know that beer played a central part in the story...)



"Chusie", Bob Cruz and Ruben Fabela enjoying life on a bright sunny day.

While a Letter Carrier, other names were added to his list of companions as John Duran, Bob Cruz, Richard Ramirez, Buddy Gallegos and Keith Schooley became more than just names as their friendships blossomed through many hours spent working on each other's home improvement projects.

And, they proved to be true friends! As Chusie's health declined in the last few years, each of these individuals would often visit him either at home or during one of his hos-

pital stays. He *always* appreciated that they remembered him!

Most of us don't realize how good we have it until our health deteriorates. In 2012, Jesse contracted the West Nile Virus and it impacted his immune system. More recently, because of a diagnosis of chronic kidney disease, he had to begin dialysis in February 2017.

While undergoing dialysis in his second week of treatment, Jesse went into cardiac arrest when he suffered a stroke. He never regained consciousness.

The last two weeks and two days of his life were spent in the hospital. Mary Lou and the rest of Jesse's family — faced with an agonizing choice — made the decision to unhook him from life support on March 9.

However, they all knew that Jesse would **NOT** have wanted to live that way. He had always been so very active for his entire life. Even after retirement in 1991 capped his

thirty-five years of federal service, he didn't slow down at all.

At times like this, many memories come to mind. Mary Lou shared that (because of his military background) Chusie *always* shined his uniform shoes until the children became old enough to take over that chore. When asked how much he paid his kids for this service, his daughter, Sonja, exclaimed, "He *never* paid us. But, he would gladly have paid his grandchildren to to shine those shoes!"

Seven year old Alina is the “ca-boose” in Chusie’s grandchild train. She demonstrated how loudly she



would have to talk to get her grandfather’s attention as he had gotten to be so hard of hearing.

But, just because he was who he was (and he remained feisty and scrappy to the end), Jesse enjoyed making Alina work at it!

His most important thing was “Family”. Jesse was so very actively involved in the lives of so many different family members!

There were so many testimonies presented as people gathered on the evening before his funeral. Many cited the impact that Jesse’s tough love had made on them when they were young. Others spoke about the way that Chusie would invest so much of his time and talents to helping them work on their homes.

There was also a zest to Chusie’s life. He worked hard and he also knew how to have a good time! There are numerous pictures of Jesse, beer in hand, surrounded by friends and family at a variety of gatherings.

Jesse would have been extremely pleased to see how many people gathered around “The Wall” to share stories about the many things that he had done in his life.

Many of the postal people shared memories with each other about some of Jesse’s exploits with them and even with his customers. (It was a different post office back then...)

There seemed to be an unending supply of “Do you remember the time that Chusie...” kinds of stories that were shared by those who had been around him at different points in his life.

While there is no way that I can present a full listing of all of the former co-workers who showed up to honor him at the funeral, here is just a short incomplete list: Mike Towery, “Wimpy”, Richard Rodriguez, Frank Diaz, Homer Ruiz, Frank Thomasy, Art Ornelas, “Foo Foo”, Zeke Lopez, Jo Ann Rowles, Bill Holland, John and Vernoica Rugnao, Karl Hererra, Mark Carter, Teddy Martinez, Bob Cruz, Buddy and Frances Gallegos, “Duke”, John Duran, Alfred Martinez, and Ruben Fabela.

The thread that seemed to run through this tapestry that Chusie wove throughout *all* of his interactions was generosity. He was generous with his time and was truly willing to do whatever needed to be done and worked hard at anything he decided that he needed to accomplish.

### **Jesse accomplished a lot!**

And, sometimes, even his family didn’t even know about some of the things that he had done.

This is best illustrated by something which happened on the night before Jesse’s funeral when the family were all gathered in the house.

There was a knock on the door. When the door was opened, a man was standing there. He asked if he could come in. Nobody knew him.

He explained that he had moved into the neighbor-

hood recently; and, when he had first driven by their house a guy had waved at him. The guy who waved at him had later come by the house he was moving into and had welcomed him to the neighborhood and told him that he hoped he would like living here.

Each time he drove by the house, the same guy — Chusie — would wave to him. One day, he had pulled over to get better acquainted with Jesse and he had been asked if he wanted a beer.

He and Jesse sat by The Wall, had their beers and he felt like he was moving into a pretty nice area.

He further explained that he hadn’t seen his new friend in a couple of weeks. When he saw all of the cars, he had a feeling that something had happened and he felt that he needed to stop and find out.

Yes, Jesse, you accomplished a lot!

“Chusie”, Rest in Peace.

BASIL ZUNIGA



# Through rain, heat, holidays

By SUSAN RIFE COX  
Californian staff writer

This article reprinted from the Wednesday, December 5, 1984  
*Bakersfield Californian* "ACCENT" Section D

**"I used to be 6 feet, 1 inch," cracked Jesse Avalos.**

Twenty-seven years of carrying heavy mail satchels, he claims, have compressed his former stature into a compact 5 feet, 6 inches.

The holiday season brings even heavier loads of mail for letter carriers to deliver, along with an infinite variety of packages. Letter Carriers (called mailmen in simpler times) lug their leather satchels stuffed with Christmas cards and a seemingly endless supply of advertising circulars — all on top of the usual letters, bills, bank statements and (less frequently) checks.

Avalos has hoisted that heavy mailbag — it's not supposed to weigh more than 35 pounds full, but often weights 45 or 50 pounds — over his shoulder and tramped through yards delivering the mail since 1957.

Although the holidays bring an extra measure of work for the U.S. Postal Service workers, the situation now is better than it was years ago.

"It's not really that bad," said Avalos, scuffing through fallen leaves in a middle-class Oildale neighborhood. "In the past, people would mail everything at one time, two weeks before Christmas." Now, he said, people spread their mailing out over several weeks before Christmas.

Behind the Oildale station last week, evidence of early-bird mailers was piling up — packages, large and small, destined for Bakersfield residents, were waiting to be processed and delivered.

The bulk of the holiday mail being delivered now is just that bulk and third-class mail. "We don't call it junk mail," Avalos said. The crush of packages and letters will begin early this month, building to a crescendo just before Christmas.

"The parcels start coming in about the same time as the Christmas cards," Avalos said.

Holiday season or any season, the mail must be delivered. Most of it is handled by the U.S. Postal Service, and although some private mail services threaten part of the Postal Service's monopoly, the cost of mailing a missive still is eminently reasonable at 20 cents.

Although the holiday season brings more personal messages and packages, people eagerly await the arrival of their letter carrier the year round.

"People look forward to their mail every day," Avalos said, "even if it's nothing but duns."

Avalos began his career as a letter carrier in 1957 in the Post Office Annex formerly located on H Street. He's delivered mail in Oildale since 1962. Although he now works as a relief carrier, filling in on one of five different routes each day when the regular carrier is off, people on his routes know him by name — and he

knows them: names, kids' and pets' names, cars they drive, where they work. The biggest obstacle to delivering the mail, Avalos said, is dogs.

Avalos was off work for nine weeks last year after he was bitten on the hand by a dog, but that wasn't the only time he's crossed paths with toothy beasts.

"I've been bitten by dogs nine times," he said.

Sometimes, dog owners are embarrassed and more than willing to help the mail carrier if he's bitten by their pet, but other dog owners can be callous. On Avalos' most recent dog bite, he said, "The guy didn't care, either. That's what makes me mad. But I've been bitten before when the people were very concerned about it."

As he spoke, he delivered mail to a box mounted on the outside of a chain link fence. On the inside of the fence, a large brown dog barked



loudly and wagged his tail.

"He doesn't want to play," Avalos said. "You look like a drumstick on his menu."

A problem for newcomers on the route is simply locating the mailboxes, which come in all sizes and shapes and can be mounted most anywhere on the front of a house. Some are near or in the door; others are on the garage; still others are attached to fences. Some are small and won't hold all the mail; door slots often chew up magazines or carrier's fingers. At one house on Avalos' route, a large dog flung himself against the door as Avalos pushed the mail through the slot. The sound of snapping jaws was all too clear.

Another time a dog threw himself through a closed window as Avalos delivered the mail. The shattering glass scared both the dog and letter carrier.

Avalos figures he might walk as much as 10 miles a day on his route — exercise that keeps his weight down but ages his bones as well. It's that heavy mail satchel that does it. Avalos complains about bursitis in his right shoulder.

The mailbag gets heavier during the holidays and on odays of the month when government checks go out.

"The worst weeks we have are the last week of the month and the first week of the month. Welfare days are bad," he said.

*Thank you, Mary Lou! You saved me countless hours of scrolling through microfiche because you saved this article!!! Chusie would be proud of you!*

Editor-guy Basil Zuniga

FELIX ADAMO / Californian Staff

Jesse Avalos winds his way through Oildale front yards

# March 19, 2017 Eulogy for Chusie Avalos



**by Mark Muniz, Brother-in-Law**

Good Evening Everyone. On behalf of the Avalos Family I'd like to thank you for coming here to show your love and respect and to share your stories and experiences of life with Chusie.

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Mark Muniz, husband to Mary Lou's sister Cecilia Ruiz. It's my honor to deliver

this brief biography of our friend, father, husband and grandfather. Following this Eulogy the Family invites any and all of you to come up and share a memory. Telling our stories is one very important way we keep our friends and family who have passed away from this earth alive in our hearts.

Jesse "Chusie" Avalos was born on September 12, 1938 to Victor and Frances Avalos in Bakersfield California. He is the oldest of 3 children, raised on East 8th street along with his sister Mary Ellen "Babe" Camacho and brother Johnny Avalos .

It was in that neighborhood where he met and established most of his life-long friends. He attended Guadalupe Elementary School, Garces High School and Bakersfield High School where he graduated in 1956. (There must be a reason he started at a Catholic High School but graduated at the Public School. Something about an argument with the Monsignor who "requested his immediate absence"— maybe someone here can fill in the details of that story.)

Remarkably, Chusie went on to obtain his AA from Bakersfield college, and in December 1959 he enlisted in the United States Army in. He had the knack of making friends where ever he went, and it was in the Army where he met his long time friend Paul Manriquez, who also recently passed away. They remained close friends throughout their lives.



Although they were miles apart, whenever they got together it was like no time had passed at all. Paul and Chusie are together again reminiscing about their old Army days and picking up where they left off.

Chusie had already established a friendship with Mary Lou Ruiz's family years before he went into the service, He was friends with Mary Lou's brother Phillip Ruiz but it wasn't until Chusie got out of the army in 1962 when he finally asked Mary Lou out on a date. After dating for a little over a year he and Mary Lou Ruiz were married in December of 1963.



They went on to have three boys, VJ, Derek and Tommy. After three boys they crossed their fingers and tried one last time for a girl. In January of 1977 they had Sonja Marie and their family was complete!

With this growing family, Chusie embarked on one of his biggest projects- the addition to his house! Whatever he set his mind on you could always be assured that he would follow through. So in 1978 along with many work buddies and his oldest son VJ, he began the grueling adventure.



The project took years to complete and he could always rely on other co-workers, friends, family members and even people he knew from delivering mail to stop by (with plenty of beer) to help out. The memories, stories and good times that come



from making something good together with your hands lasted a life time and are still shared.

Even after he completed his house he kept busy with different projects.

Many friends and family turned to him for his help and expertise.

They all knew if anyone knew how to do it and would be willing to help, Chusie would!



In his younger years he enjoyed anything that had to do with the outdoors. He enjoyed sharing his stories about all his yearly hunting trips to Colorado with all his hunting buddies which included the Marquez's, the Lopez's, Morales's, Rodriguez's, Valenzuela's and Teutemiz's.



He enjoyed taking his kids and his friends kids under his wing and teaching them the ropes, whether if it was how to fish, use a hunting rifle or even if it was how to fix anything around the house or working on cars. There wasn't much he did not know how to do.

Chusie and Mary Lou enjoyed spending weekends going to special events, weddings, birthdays, New Years Eve Parties, anything that had to do with music, dancing and cocktails!

They would go with their friends, Johnny and Martha Morales, Freddy and Donna Castro, Junior and Olga Rodriguez, just to name a few.

Chusie was a fun, easy to get a long with kinda guy, but he did earn his reputation for being a man not to messed with. Once you crossed him or any of his friends, he was the first one to step up and go toe to toe with anyone regardless of their size or how many guys he was up against.

As he got older he enjoyed the simpler things in life: playing golf with his childhood friends, Freddy Castro, Johnny Morales, Oscar Cantu, Joaquin Resendez. and never far from their thoughts and hearts, their childhood friend Junior Rodriguez.

When he wasn't hanging out with his friends Chusie enjoyed spending time with all his grandchildren, step-grandchildren kids and great grandchildren. He enjoyed going to all of their sporting events and was always their number one fan. He got so much joy and satisfaction spoiling his grandchildren-there is nothing that he would not give them or do for them. If there was something the kids could not get from their parents grandpa was the first one they would run to and he was always the one to get them what they wanted.





In 2009 Chusie underwent heart surgery. It was a difficult thing for him to go through but he was determined to get back to normal life. Then in 2012 he faced a set back when he contracted West Nile virus. As strong as he was the West Nile took a toll on his body. He defied the odds and when the doctors said his prognosis was grim, Chusie fought back. He was back home within 3 weeks.

West Nile did not crush his spirit or determination. Although he was faced with accepting that he could no longer do all the things he enjoyed doing, he found other things that brought him joy, like spending his days sitting at “The Wall” watching and waving and talking to folks that passed by. A lot of the people did not even know him but he made himself such a neighborhood fixture that people felt as if they knew him for years!

Chusie also enjoyed taking trips to Bishop for opening fishing season, and taking camping trips with family and friends.

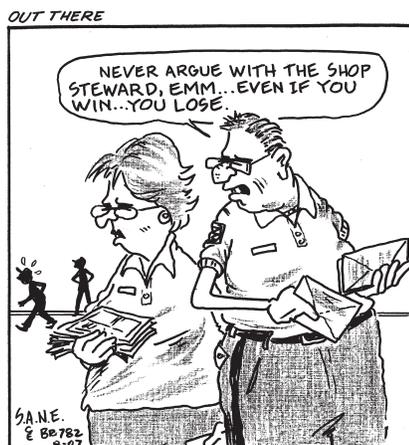
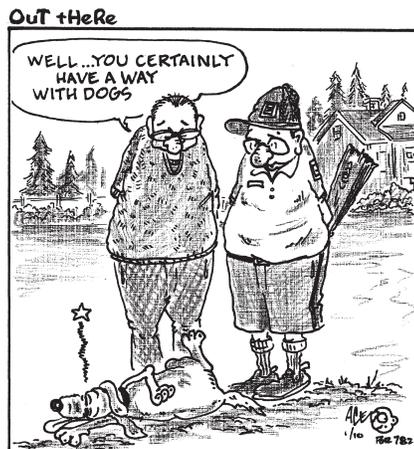
His last stay in the hospital was a true testament of just exactly how special of a man he was. Every day he was visited by so many family, friends and loved ones. His childhood friend since kindergarten Freddy Castro, neighborhood friend

Richard Rodriguez and his compadre from the postal service, Buddy Gallegos, were there everyday. talking to him and encouraging him. They were so consistent that his grand daughter Therese nick named them “The Golden Boys” from the 80’s sitcom “The Golden Girls”!!

Chusie lived his life as we all should- with no regrets. Live life to its fullest, work hard, respect others, cherish family and friends and do what you love to do with all that you have.

God Speed Chusie Avalos, you are loved and you are missed.

***Cartoons in something like this? Why would they be used at all? Just because Jesse would probably have identified with the humor in this work by our Branch 782 Special Assistant Newsletter Editor Fred Acedo...***



# Chusie was thanked for his service to our country



The flag-folding ceremony is a symbolic part of our national history and culture. It represents the same principles our country was founded on. The portion of the flag donating honor is the blue canton with stars, representing the states.

The **FIRST** fold of the flag represents the Postal Service, the institution to which you devoted more than 30 years of service.

The **SECOND** fold is made in honor and remembrance of your fellow Letter Carriers and military veterans who departed our ranks and gave a portion of their lives for service to our country.

The **THIRD** fold represents human nature; for, because of its basic weaknesses and flaws the American citizens called and relied on your service to protect their treasured way of life.

The **FOURTH** fold is a tribute to your country, for in the words of Steven Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right, but she is still our country right or wrong.

The **FIFTH** fold is for your heart. For it is with your heart that you pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The **SIXTH** fold is a tribute to your family who also served their country, sacrificing precious time with you, so you may focus on your responsibilities to your country.

The **SEVENTH** fold is a tribute to Mothers, for their faith, love, loyalty, and devotion molded the character of the men and women who made this country great.

The **EIGHTH** fold is a tribute to Fathers, for they, too, gave their Sons and Daughters to the defense of our country since she was first born.

The **NINETH** fold stands for the Constitution, the founding document of our republic we swore to protect with our lives.

The **TENTH** fold represents the American public, whom you committed your life, for your service helped preserve their rights and freedoms into the next generation and they are eternally grateful.

Mark Carter, U.S. Coast Guard Veteran and retired postal employee, was a member of the Associated Veterans of Bakersfield Honor Guard which provided full military honors to Jesse Avalos at his funeral services at Union Cemetery in Bakersfield, California.



Mark Carter presents a memorial box of cartridges expended during the salute to Jesse's service to Mary Lou Avalos.



Chusie passed away on March 9, 2017. He was born September 12, 1938 in Bakersfield, CA. He attended Garces and Bakersfield High Schools. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving as a Combat Engineer in the Vietnam era in Germany from 1959 - 1962. He was employed by the U.S. Postal Service for over 30 years.

Chusie is preceded in death by his parents, Victor and Frances, and sister Babe (Mary Ellen). He is survived by his wife, Mary

Lou; brother Johnny; children VJ (Vicky), Derek (Ricardo), Tommy (Gabby), and Sonja; grandchildren Erika, Therese, Tommy, Tori, Marcus, Issac, Tonie, Joshua and Alina; great-grandchildren Andrew and Aubri; and numerous extended grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and godchildren.

In earlier years, Chusie was an avid sportsman, enjoyed hunting, fishing, and anything that involved socializing. He was a self-

taught man with skills that included carpentry, building and fixing anything he put his mind to. In later years, he enjoyed everything involving his children and grandchildren. It brought him happiness to gather for barbecues and yearly trips to Bishop. He loved to watch his grandchildren's sports activities and overall accomplishments. The only time he spent away from his family was to golf with his close buddies. Many would see Chusie relaxing outside in the front yard known as "the wall" where he waved and talked to everyone.

There are not many men who hold the qualities that our dad had. He will be greatly missed and the loss will continue to be felt by all of us.

A viewing was held on Sunday, March 19th from 4 - 8 p.m. and there was a Rosary at 6 p.m. at Greenlawn Mortuary (3700 River Boulevard). Graveside services followed at 11 a.m. on March 20th at Union Cemetery (730 Potomac Avenue).

Obituary published in the  
March 17, 2017 *Bakersfield Californian*

*He was a man of friend ship, a man of love.*

*He was a man of selflessness, a man who got all his strength from above.*

*If you knew him, he had a heart of gold and mouth of a sailor when needed, and when it came to hard work, he ALWAYS exceeded.*

*Perfectly seen in The Lord's eyes.*

*Perfectly made in The Lord's image.*

*To be called his friend, child, or grand-child, is such a privilege.*

*You were such a light to everyone you knew, produced endless smiles and laughter.*

*Even in times of distress, you still made the room brighter.*

*He portrayed the characteristics of Christ, A father to the fatherless, and charitable to the helpless.*

*A savior to a young girl in the river, though some would have quivered, just when we thought hope was lost, you tossed your self in with intentions to get her out no matter the cost.*

*You set the bar for men that we hope to reach. You left a stain on our hearts as potent as bleach.*

*Thank you for your knowledge and your characteristics.*

*Thank you for endless love and your time in specific.*

*Though you are gone you will forever be with us.*

*In times of stress in times of laughter. It brings me peace knowing you're with The Father.*

*I love you.*

*by Tommy Avalos*

## and more from the editor-guy...

The passing of Chusie Avalos marked a milestone for all of his family members. It should also be noted that his story is also a look at the history of Branch 782 and of the Postal Service itself.

### *Remembering and honoring Chusie pays homage to an entire generation of individuals who paved the way for an improved life for those of us who followed.*

Jesse started his postal career in 1957. Seeds of change which led to the postal strike in 1970 were already beginning to bloom. As is noted in *Carriers in a Common Cause*, a 1956 "Postal Record" reported that 'the average American family' earned \$5,520 a year before taxes while the average Letter Carrier earned \$4,400 — \$1,120 a year less..."

In 1957, it had been four years since there had been a \$400 pay raise. And, there would be no pay raise until 1960. Why? Any pay raises had to be approved by Congress. Because there was no collective agreement in place, Letter Carriers had to rely on "collective begging".

Additionally, changes to the duties of Letter Carriers had been instituted by PMGs Donaldson and Summerfield as they pursued a strategy of keeping postal wages as low as possible.

As indicated in another passage from *Carriers in a Common Cause*, "By 1960, Letter Carriers were having serious financial difficulties. A substantial number of them could not even qualify for an FHA loan to buy a home..." Carriers mounted a campaign to lobby Congress on their behalf and a pay bill was passed in June. But, President "Eisenhower, in his last year as president, vetoed the legislation... NALC lobbied firecely for a veto override and was victorious. On July, 1, 1960, Congress overwhelmingly overrode the veto — **one of only two of the 169 vetoes to be overridden in eight years...**"

To accomplish such a feat was not something that would have been attempted by someone who was feeble or who would be easily cowed. Although Jesse was serving his country in the United States Army at that time, after his discharge he returned to find a situation that required his willingness to continue the fight for Rights and Benefits he felt were his due!



(left to right) Bertha and Tony Chavez, Ann and Richard Suniga, Chusie and Mary Lou Avalos, John and Penny Wonderly as Branch 782 and Auxiliary 458 delegates to a national convention in 1982. While the photographer isn't known, it may have been Branch 782 member "E.A." Baker.

Through 1949, Carriers had no health insurance because those benefits were not provided for any federal workers. **In 1950, the NALC created its own Health Benefit Program** — that action by NALC Letter Carriers led the way to passage of the Federal Employee Benefits Act of 1959.

*We have Jesse and his generation to thank for so very much we may take for granted.*

Obviously, where we work today is an entirely different organization than the one where Jesse Avalos found himself in the mid-1950s. If you listen to some of the stories from people who were there, you wonder how they would get away with some of the things that they did.

Disputes between co-workers were often settled "out on the back dock". And, given Chusie's temperment, he wouldn't shy away from situations where he felt that he had been wronged. Accounts of how he would offer "attitude adjustments" were shared at his funeral by the many, now-retired, postal workers in attendance.

One time, Jesse came in from the street. His shirt was torn and he looked a little scuffed. Asked what happened he replied, "I had a problem with a dog. The owner called me an S.O.B. and I couldn't let that go!" That same spirit led him to resolve issues at Branch meetings or picnics that required his special attention. Size or number of opponents didn't matter to him.

Moreover, there were countless tales of how Jesse's generosity and willingness to help others were part of his nature as well. It is perhaps because he was so willing to give of himself that others also invested themselves in his life.

Chusie's story is woven into the history of NALC Branch 782. Here is one perfect example which illustrates that.

After he added an extra living area to the back of his home, he built an entire second floor. And, he did this with the help of many of his co-workers. One Letter Carrier who showed up to work and drink beer with everybody else as they gathered was Ed "E.A." Baker. ("**E.A.**" is the individual for whom our newsletter is named!)

"E.A." (the Reverend) and Chusie would conduct "bible studies" while sipping from their Budweisers during construction.

One day, while working upstairs, he told Jesse that he wasn't feeling well. Taken to the hospital, it was found that he had had a heart attack, and while there, he kept trying to tell others how they had to finish the NALC newsletter. He died there.

The Avalos family know that the ghostly footsteps they hear upstairs are "E.A." and they smile. He and Jesse are probably going to be finishing that bible study...

BASIL ZUNIGA