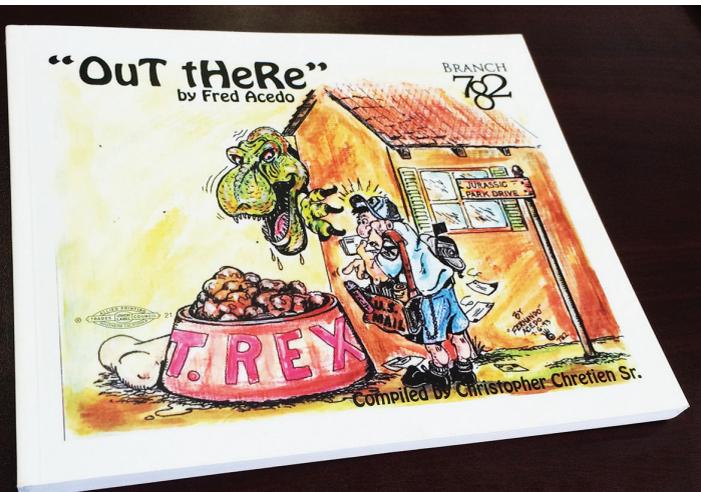


Inside 'OuT tHeRe'



A book compiling Acedo's "OuT tHeRe" cartoons from 1993 to 2002 is available for purchase from Branch 782.



Fred Acedo will admit he's a little "out there." But that's exactly what makes his cartoons so funny.

"I am out there as far as my humor and things I say and do," the Bakersfield, CA Branch 782 retiree said. "I'm a little bit nuts, in a good way."

The 75-year-old has used his unusual sense of humor to create his "OuT tHeRe" cartoons, about the crazy letter carriers and misguided managers in the Postal Service, for the branch newsletter since 1993. His cartoons have taken on a life of their own, being rerun in other branches' newsletters across the country.

Acedo started drawing from an early age as a form of entertainment. "As a kid, we were poor, so all of my cousins and me, we got one of those nickel pads of paper and a pencil and we all drew," he recalled. "We usually drew girls because there weren't any *Playboy* books back then." After high school, Acedo joined the Navy for a four-year stint, serving as a dental technician making dentures. Even while in the service, he kept up his drawing.

"I used to draw cartoons of the doctors and the dentists," he said. "I used to do it under the counter. But then they found out I was doing the cartoons and then they all wanted their cartoons drawn, too."

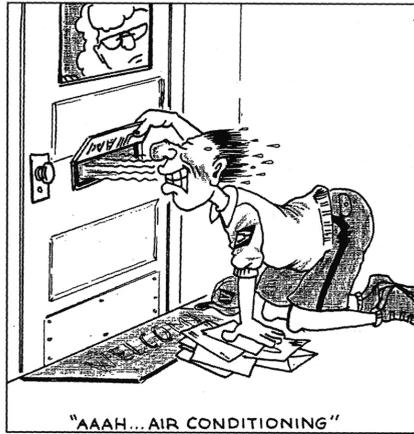
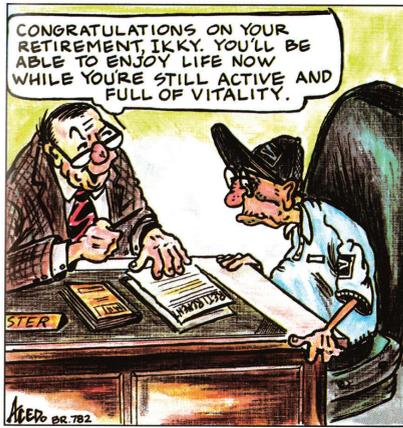
After the Navy and a job in a shoe store, he became a letter carrier, where he stayed for 37 years, retiring about nine years ago. He enjoyed being out in the elements and getting exercise. And still, he drew his cartoons, with other carriers passing them around the office, despite their sometimes inappropriate content.

Eventually, **Basil Zuniga**, the editor of Branch 782's *E.A. Baker Union Update*, asked if he could include them in the branch newsletter. But it took a little more to get Acedo to commit.

"I had heart surgery and the post office was giving me a hard time about it," he remembered. "I didn't go through that very well. I had a kind of breakdown. And the post office was trying to force me out. The union backed me up. They said to repay them, I could do some cartoons for them. They liked my cartoons anyway—it was just a way to get me to commit to doing cartoons for them."

That experience also gave him the title for his cartoons.

"I kind of had a mental breakdown and they took me into the psych ward for 72 hours because I was having ugly thoughts," he said.



"And I thought that was a little bit out there. 'Out there' was kind of like crazy people. And people have made reference to the fact that I was nuts. I figured I'd just go with it."

The cartoons were a big hit and he enjoyed doing them. Zuniga will pick from the pile of cartoons he has (he estimates it is nine inches tall) when composing an issue of the newsletter. Once the issue is printed, Zuniga



sends out copies to more than 600 other branches, many of which reprint Acedo's cartoons from the issue. Fans have written Acedo to tell him how much they enjoy his work.

One of the recurring jokes in the cartoons is about dogs. "I had a lot of problems with dogs," he said, adding that a lot of carriers can relate. "If you get a bunch of letter carriers together, the first thing they're going to talk about is their dog bites and dog experiences."

Acedo's favorite cartoon concerns Ikky, the little bald carrier (who Acedo

admits is his alter ego), while on his lunch break at a Mexican restaurant. The burrito he's eaten is doing something to his heart, as seen on the previous page. "That's my all-time favorite," the cartoonist said.

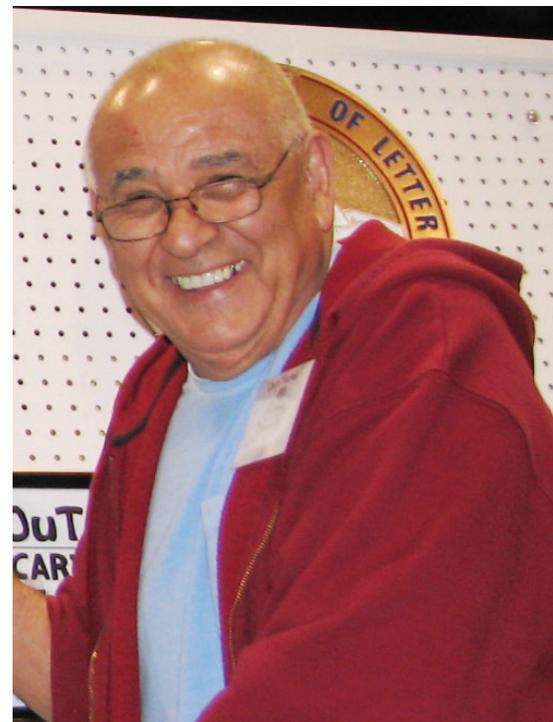
Branch 782 collected his cartoons from 1993 to 2002 and put together a book that it sold at NALC's national convention in Anaheim in 2010 to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. You can buy a copy of the book from the branch by contacting Branch Recording Secretary Kim Gerdes at kgerdes@hotmail.com or 661-834-2059.

In 2006, Acedo retired from the Postal Service, allowing him to spend more time with his wife of 55 years, his daughter and his two granddaughters. He appreciates his career as a letter carrier for the opportunities it has given him and his family.

In addition to his cartooning, Acedo enjoys other artistic endeavors, such as oil painting and crafting Native American dolls out of leather and deer skin. "I do a little bit of everything," he said. He also was kind enough to illustrate the cover of this issue of *The Postal Record*.

While Acedo still produces cartoons for editor Zuniga, he's also thinking about the end of the road.

"My wife and I already bought our graves and our gravestones," he said. He had "OuT tHeRe" engraved on his. "The people who know me will understand the 'OuT tHeRe' and the people who don't will think I'm just out there." PR



Fred Acedo at the 2010 NALC convention

