



THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

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NERVOUS TIMES

Poorly managed, poorly run postal service

By Roland Garshol, Past President Branch 214

These are nervous economic times. We knew that President Obama was going to have his hands full, but as the US Senate squabbles over the recovery package, you have to wonder if there was anything we could have done to win just one more Senate seat.

I have yet to see one bright sign in the steaming pile of dung that was once the greatest economic engine on the planet, left by former President George Bush as he slinks back to Texas.

Caught in the morass is the Postal Service. Poorly managed. Poorly run. But unlike many of the companies struggling to survive, the Postal Service soldiers on with a product that, let's face it, is steadily headed the way of the

If you're optimistic the post office can turn around, look at your supervisor.

dinosaur. To make matters worse, if there was any chance for the Postal Service to turn itself around and become relevant, that task would be in the hands of Postal management. If that prospect doesn't scare you, when you walk into work tomorrow, take a long look at the individual sitting at the supervisor's desk, and ask yourself if that makes you feel any better about the future?

Scare tactics from Postmaster

Compounding the current nervous state is the Postmaster General Potter's recent trip to Congress, where he stated that things were so bad, that if the Postal Service didn't get some relief from certain financial obligations, they would only be able to perform their primary function, delivering mail, 5 days a week, instead of the current 6.

The five day work week

When postal workers hear this, they collectively scream, "Hip, Hip, Hooray", "Weekends Off!" Then management yanks out the nozzle from the rainbow enema,

and tells the employees that the days off will be Tuesday or Wednesday, and they will never have two days off together again! Then the employees collectively scream

The five day delivery proposal is a scare tactic.

"Noooooooooooo!" And "Voila!" the idea of 5 day delivery is unappealing to both postal workers and the mailing public, alike. But that's OK, the Postal Service never had any intention of cutting back to 5 days. They only wanted the financial relief I told you about back in the beginning of this paragraph. The rest was just a ploy.

Too many managers

Personally, I will never believe that the Post Office is in dire straits until I hear that the ranks of management have been or will be dramatically slashed, a thing, boys and girls, that will never happen. I firmly believe that it's the bureaucracy of the Postal Service that is dragging it down. Such an easy job of taking letters from one place

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Branch Notes

Welcome the following new alternate stewards: Frances Lopez, Sharon Ivory, Jim Sotelo (San Leandro Main), Renee Rafalo, (San Rafael Civic), Bobby Abad, (94108—Rincon West), Angela Bibb-Merritt, (94107—Station E), Arnold Tile-tile, Bert Villena, (94102—EPC North), Larry Gerigk, (94111—Rincon East).

Correction: Our super senior letter carrier Wing Woo was placed in the wrong station in a photo caption in the last issue of **The Voice**. As everyone knows, Wing Woo is from Station F in San Francisco and now retired.

The Vallejo office of **The Voice** is alive and kicking under the direction of **Herb Mitchell**. We thank him for his efforts on the last issue and the current issue.

We received proofreading help for the current issue from past president **Richard Becker**. We thank him for his keen eyes.



Photo courtesy Karen Eshabarr

The Branch 214 lobbying delegation at NALC headquarters with bust of President Emeritus Vince Sombrotto. From left, June Buccat, Karen Schuler, Karen Eshabarr, Lili Beaumont and Mathew Ressio. They met with California legislators between March 9 and March 14. See other photos on page 9.

Branch Officers

- Lili Beaumont President
- Ray Fong Executive Vice-President
- Bill Thornton Vice-President
- Karen Schuler Secretary-Treasurer
- Karen Eshabarr Field Director
- June Buccat Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
- Charles Gonzalez Sergeant-at-Arms
- Franklin Woo NALC Health Benefits
- Leonard Cruz Safety and Health
- Cathy Simonson EEO Officer
- Mike Callahan MBA representative
- Kim Truong Director of Organization
- Roberta Bojo Trustee
- Stanley Lew Trustee
- Sheila Gardner Trustee

Voice Staff

- Ivars Lauersons Editor
- Edwina Wu Associate Editor
- Gerry Lee Graphics

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GOLDEN GATE BRANCH
 2310 Mason St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94133
 Phone: (415) 362-0214
 WEB page:
<http://www.nalcbayarea.com>
 Office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday

SF BAY AREA POSTAL AT GOOGLE

Announcing a
 New Google
 Group for SF
 Bay Area
 Postal people

<http://groups.google.com/group/SF-Bay-Area-Postal->

You don't need a Google account to join the group.

In these tough economy times we need a postal Google group so we can: post ideas, set up carpools, advertise a side business, sell items, rent out spaces, suggest websites. Use it like a mini Craigslist within the SF Bay Area. To join go to the website above or email the moderator at RedHotChiliPepper41@gmail.com.

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T.V. 214 Schedule

SAN FRANCISCO, AT&T Cable Channel 29:
 Every third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
 March 15, 2009; April 19, 2009;
 May 17, 2009

Mysteries revealed

What happens during an EEO REDRESS mediation?

By Cathy Simonson, EEO Officer

As the Branch 214 EEO Officer, I get many calls inquiring about the steps to take when filing an EEO complaint, particularly what happens later during an EEO mediation.

The EEO complaint process can be rather intimidating if you have never filed a complaint before. I will try to keep it as simple as I can but, mind you, the branch only provides representation in this early informal stage.

Contact with EEO officer essential

You must contact me as early as possible and send a copy of the completed form to the union. This is so I can establish a case folder for you and do some research on any related grievances. I encourage everyone to call me before submitting the forms, so I can explain the process and the difference between a grievance and an EEO complaint. I can be reached at 415-362-0214 ext. 16. If you need help filling out the forms please call the union to make an appointment with one of the officers. I have posted instructions on how to fill out the forms on our website, nalcbayarea.com (click on EEO, then under RESOURCES, click on EEO Instruction Form).



I can be reached at 415-362-0214 ext. 16. If you need help filling out the forms please call the union to make an appointment with one of the officers. I have posted instructions on how to fill out the forms on our website, nalcbayarea.com (click on EEO, then under RESOURCES, click on EEO Instruction Form).

Areas of EEO concern

Prohibited discrimination includes actions taken based on your Race, Color, Religion, Sex, Age (40+), National Origin, Physical and /or Mental Disability, or in Retaliation (actions based on your participation in prior EEO activity). You must complain within 45 days of the incident or effective date of personnel action.

The first thing you must do is call the USPS EEO hotline 1-888-336-8777. It is an automated system that

Contacting the union EEO officer is important.

will prompt you to input either your employee ID number, or your social security number and other mailing information. You should receive the forms within five days.

If you would like to have a REDRESS (Resolve Employment Disputes, Reach Equitable Solutions Swiftly)

mediation, make sure you check the NO box on the form that asks if you would like to remain anonymous. Also, sign and date the REDRESS form. It is also helpful to sign the extension form. After talking to me, you can put

The paperwork can be intimidating.

my name down as your representative along with our union address and phone number. Remember to keep a copy for yourself and one for the union.

Next, you will be contacted by a USPS EEO counselor when your forms are received. The sole purpose of their contact with you should be to establish a date in which you will be available for the mediation. If they give you a date, please call me immediately to make sure I am available also. The USPS EEO counselor will set a time and date on the clock and assign a mediator to your case.

What happens during an EEO mediation?

If I am your designated representative, I will meet with you for forty-five minutes to an hour prior to the scheduled mediation so we can discuss your issues, our strategy, and what you are seeking as a resolution. Mediators are assigned on a rotational and availability basis. Some are better at helping the parties come to an agreement than others. The mediator is not a judge or an

Read the portion here that deals with what happens at mediation.

arbitrator so he/she cannot decide who is right or wrong. Their purpose is to have both sides sit down and discuss the issue(s) and negotiate an agreement in writing.

The Postal Service pays the mediator for four hours automatically. Your mediation may take less time or, as in most cases, take more time, depending on how complex your case is. During any part of the mediation you can choose to speak to me in private or have us speak in private with the mediator. The other party will have an equal chance also. Anything you discuss with either me or with the mediator will not be discussed in front of the other party if you don't wish it to be.

At the meeting you will get a chance to say what happened, when it happened and how it affected you. Additionally you can tell the other party what is acceptable and what is not. You will get a chance to hear from them their reasons for mistreating you and will be able to speak out in your defense. I say all this because even though I am your representative, this is your mediation, this is your chance to be heard and let it all hang out (except for

(continued on page 4)

Simonson (continued from page 3)

threats of harm or reports of fraud or abuse). Alternately, you can do minimal talking and let me do the rest. I usually advise you to let me do most of the talking if the issue involves disciplinary or personnel action.

Keep in mind that if you do not negotiate an agreement at the mediation, you will need to decide whether or not you want to continue into the formal appeal. It may not be wise to disclose everything in your basket if this is something you are considering. Mediators are not usually interested in any documents you might have, but you should bring them so I can go over them beforehand, as they may come in handy to support your claim of discrimination.

Please be honest with me before the meeting about any prior discipline or events that management may bring up during the meeting. I can't count how many times I have been surprised to hear management cite several prior encounters and discipline on a complainant's record. Don't be shy, there is nothing I have not heard and I will

not judge you for it. It is better for me to know all the facts before the mediation while we can talk privately than for our side to look unprepared and untruthful in

Be honest with your EEO rep. to avoid surprises at the hearing.

front of the mediator. There is a good chance your case will be resolved in the mediation if the issues involve unjust treatment based on discrimination.

Some issues may not be considered acceptable for REDRESS mediation, such as live cases involving the Office of Personnel Management, Office of Inspector General or Office of Worker's Compensation. This is because this does not fall under the USPS's jurisdiction. If your case involves any of these, please consult an attorney for best representation. If your case is not resolved during mediation, you will get a Notice of Right to File an EEO Complaint. You will have 15 days to file.



Ruth Mattes and her husband, David checking in at annual lunch, December 2008.



Jim Therriault and Veronica Jimenez checking in at annual lunch, December 2008.



Station G carrier Sandra Ramos and family enjoying the Branch 214 annual lunch on December, 2008.



Past President Richard Becker, his mom Jean, and President Lili Beaumont at annual lunch.

Photos by Ron Caluag and Cherry Vargas

Vital part of post office

In defense of the grievance procedure

By Bill Thornton, Vice President

Contrary to management propaganda, the grievance procedure is not some evil beast that lurks in the darkness, ready to disrupt the operation, a mechanism for shop stewards to run amuck, necessitating calling the police, placing them on 16.7 and calling the union office to please put your stewards in their place.

But back to the grievance procedure. It is purely and simply a dispute resolution mechanism that allows disputes to be resolved between union/employees and management while management **is able to continue to conduct the business.**



Now, management may wish that there were no disputes, or that if there were disputes that they could just ignore them, i.e. that there were no employee rights/no contract and any type of management behavior could go unchecked. (Sort of like McDonald's or Wal-Mart)

The grievance procedure is part of the "civilized" process that arose as an alternative to chaos.

It is "a process for settling or redressing employee complaints."

Disputes in the workplace

All disputes are not grievances in the workplace. There is an NALC/Postal Service national agreement that deals primarily with "wages and working conditions."

The union does not have control over how management runs the Postal Service (but is concerned and lobbies to

Grievance procedure is not some evil beast.

affect policies and regulations that are considered beneficial to the continued survival of the Postal Service.) Article 3, "Management Rights and Responsibilities," enumerates the management rights to run the business but also lists its responsibilities to run it in a manner that is not detrimental to the employees.

Contract protections

The contract protects the employees' wages and also their working conditions. This is where the grievance procedure normally comes into play, when management

violates various contractual provisions. This includes many things that are a part of Federal Law such as OWCP/FECA regulations, Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, etc. and other guarantees that relate to how the employee is treated in the course of a workday that have

Grievance procedure safeguards carriers' contractual rights.

been negotiated into the national agreement and many that are memorialized in handbooks and manuals. Think of bidding rights, 8 hour guarantees for full time carrier employees, due process under Art 16 etc. Sometimes forgotten is management responsibility memorialized in 115, M-39 to treat employees with mutual respect and to manage in a civilized manner and 662 ELM, to be honest and forthright.

Trying to reduce grievances

So all disputes are not grievances but all grievances are disputes.

Over the years, there have been attempts to "reduce grievances". This is admirable if it means that management reduces grievances by following the contract. It is not admirable if management attempts to squash the steward, keeps the steward from filing grievances, refuses to follow the procedures of the grievance procedure, etc.

At least yearly, joint training sessions for stewards and supervisors are conducted in what is known as the JCAM, Joint Contract Administration Manual, in order

Article 15 was mutually agreed to at national level.

to effect contract compliance, reduce grievances/conflict, and to provide the information and various matters falling under categories of wages and working conditions within various articles of the national agreement, handbooks and manuals, relevant federal regulations, local agreements, etc. Also, when disputes do arise and necessitate grievances, there are articles in the contract, primarily Art 15, but also 17 and 31, that specify how the grievance procedure is to be conducted.

Practical considerations

But practically speaking, to use a tired metaphor, the problem is when the rubber hits the road.

At the first stage of the grievance procedure, the Informal A step, supervisors are required to provide stewards time to investigate grievances, meet and attempt to resolve grievances "at the lowest level", jointly gather information and documents, etc. They routinely fail to perform these kinds of supervisor duties.

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2009 NALC Health Benefit Plan

Thousands are expected to join up

By Franklin H. Woo, NALC Health Benefit Plan Representative

Before too much longer, I will know exactly how many new members that the NALC Health Benefit Plan has picked up since the last Open Season. I know that the numbers will be staggering, since the numbers of new enrollees have already exceeded 20,000 nationwide. This will indeed be a 'great year' for the HBP and our union!



Thanks to loyal members

It is only appropriate for me to thank all the members who have remained with their union owned / union operated health benefit plan.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated! Last but not least, my sincere thanks to all of the Branch 214 members who have enrolled with the NALC HBP for 2009. You and your family members should not be disappointed! Besides the 20 plus new benefits for 2009, the Plan was designed in the 1950's with the letter carriers and their family members in mind. Also, keep in mind,

Thornton (continued from page 5)

Mocking the procedure

It has become a mockery to send many of these recalcitrant supervisors to JCAM training.

This is not to knock the decent supervisors/managers who, while "following orders", attempt to follow the contract and to resolve disputes. But the ones that attempt to circumvent the contract continuously are usually the ones that do not follow the procedures in Article 15 when a grievance is investigated/filed. They ignore the steward's 3996 requesting grievance time, fail to provide the grievance time, refuse to seriously discuss the issues with the steward, fail to provide the union with information much less jointly gather that information, refuse to meet at Informal A and if meeting, refuse to attempt to settle at this lowest level.

Unacceptable

Why go through the charade of sending supervisors who continually "don't get it" to JCAM training?

The latest wrinkle management attempts/failure in following the grievance procedure is the attempt to establish some alternate process to the grievance procedure as

the HBP is non-profit always! Any profit made in a given year would be put back into the pot which would benefit the members of the Plan.

New white ID card

By now, all existing and new members to the NALC HBP should have already received their "new" ID cards for 2009 in the mail. For 2009, there is just one (1) card! It is white in color. Your "new" NALC Member ID number begins with the letter 'N' and a number. Plan members should use this card when seeking medical care or purchasing prescriptions.

If you have not received your "new" ID card or need additional cards, please call the home office at 1-888-636-6252 and wait until the operator comes on and ask

The Plan picked up 20,000 new members.

her to connect you with a CSR (customer service rep). You can call between 8:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. (EST). Of course, if you wish, you can leave me a voice message at (415) 362-0214 ext. 43. When you are leaving me a message, please speak clearly, slowly and spell out your last name especially.

If you haven't done so yet, please look over your NALC HBP brochure and other information that came with your packet. At least, review the summary! It's good reading and very informative!

Have a great and healthy 2009!

enumerated in Art 15. It is an unfair labor practice for management to attempt to go around the steward/Informal A procedure and negotiate directly with a grievant. It is not a violation of the National Labor Relations Act for the union to be proactive in resolving disputes, fostering a civilized work climate, having Labor/Management meetings, "Peace Teams", "Interventions", reducing grievances. But some managers are attempting to use the "intervention" as some kind of a way to put the steward(s) in their place. Management may acknowledge that a particular

It is legitimate to grieve management misbehavior.

supervisor is a problem but insists on the idea that there is a "problem steward" bearing equal responsibility for the dysfunction. This, of course, is nonsense. The union has to be willing to maintain a dialogue with management in various forums that protects our members and at the same time contributes to the survival of the Postal Service. But we cannot go down a path that undermines the steward and Article 15. Article 15 can be changed but only with the mutual agreement of the parties at the National Level.

The retiree update

Out of uniform

Edited by Lynda Beigel, Retiree

What is with the Retirees? Good Question! *What could our retirees – more and more of you every pay period - be doing now with your spare time?*

What is not being covered includes helping with the **FOOD DRIVE**. We will need folks in the stations and offices where you used to work: helping the carriers bring in the food, packing it in hampers, taking messages from customers, doing late pick ups (after carriers have returned to stations), even cooking up barbecues (where that happens). We will also need folks in the union office,



fielding phone calls and assisting our coordinators in the field. The date is **Saturday, May 9**. The contact person at the Union Office is **Karen Eshabarr, Field Director (415-362-0214 ext. 14)**, and at 180 Napoleon is Kim Truong. We might even be able to use your help at the Food Banks themselves.

Work we have to be done that is not being covered includes leadership on **legislative issues**—organizing our members on issues important to active and retired letter carriers in each congressional and state district and acting as our liaison with these offices. If you are interested in being our “point person” where you live, please contact **Karen Schuler** (or leave a message **415 362-0214 ext 11**). If you want to lead the e-mail activists or are willing to work a telephone tree, let her know.

We'd like a **Sunshine Committee**—someone to send out greeting cards to those who are laid up, perhaps even to visit. **Transportation**—someone to coordinate those volunteering to drive others with those who need rides.

Stay active with union activities.

We could also use someone knowledgeable to **provide information on retirement-related issues** who could preferably provide **two regular hours at the Union office every week**.

What are our retirees currently doing for Branch 214 to earn their keep on \$12.00 a year dues?

Sheila Gardner as Chief Trustee is putting records in order and organizing storage at the office. **Dan Soohoo** is picking up the lunches and delivering them to the Retiree Meeting five times a year. **Vicki Sawicki** is serving on

the “green building” committee to make our office more energy efficient (and therefore cheaper to run). **Vernon Capps** sends out those post cards our retirees get as

The food drive is coming up.

reminders of the bi-monthly Retiree meetings. **Richard Becker** serves as an East Bay and **Dave Welsh** as a San Francisco AFL-CIO representative. **Ivars Lauersons** is still editing **The Voice**.

In addition, **Vicki** is sculpting, **Ivars** is editing his NARFE Chapter newsletter, **Dan** is taking care of his mother and volunteering at his children's school, **Vernon** is an active member and volunteer at his church. Let's hear from you!

Retirees at leisure



Photo by Ron Caluag and Cherry Vargas

Dan Soo Hoo holding a mystery ticket at annual lunch, December 2008.



Photo by Ron Caluag and Cherry Vargas

Barbara Hendry, Chuck Watkins and Al Burton at annual lunch.

Renato Centinase, Daly City letter carrier, and David Mabalatan, Presidio/Marina letter carrier, took part in the 2008 San Francisco Veteran's Day parade. They were the letter carriers in the large motorcycle contingent. Photo below shows some of the group on Market Street in San Francisco. Photo on right shows David Mabalatan, third from left, with part of the group.



Photos courtesy David Mabalatan

Branch 214 Meetings

Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

- April 1, 2009 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
- May 6, 2009 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
- June 3, 2009 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Steward meetings, 4:30 P.M.

- April 1, 2009 Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
- May 6, 2009 Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF
- June 3, 2009 Union Office, 2310 Mason St., SF

Retiree social meeting, 12:30 P.M.

- April 6, 2009 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
- June 1, 2009 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
- August 3, 2009 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF



Photo courtesy Bill Thornton

The last punch by Jessie Miranda on 2-18-09 at Visitacion—180 Napoleon

IN MEMORIAM

Llaguno, Arthur

LETTER CARRIERS LOBBY CONGRESS



Photo by Karen Eshabarr

A group of carriers and retirees from a number of Western states, including California, Nevada and Hawaii, gather for a group photo on the Capitol steps during their lobbying efforts March 9 to March 14, 2009.



Photo by Karen Eshabarr

Staff at the NALC Headquarters store helping our delegation. From left, Jerry, Janice, and James, the three "J's."



Photo courtesy Karen Eshabarr

A group of letter carriers, including Branch 214 members, meet in the hallway outside a legislator's office.

Moving along

Looking to the past, looking to the future

By Mike McAdoo, Parkside letter carrier

More than three decades ago, well, to be honest, close to four decades ago, a younger self reported for his first day on the job as a part time letter carrier in an associate post office.



The work floor seemed pretty chaotic. Guys were standing at cases, tossing magazines into shelves; other guys were wandering through a labyrinth of cases, picking up handfuls of letters and parcels. Some guys were wandering back and forth from carrier cases to clerk cases, tossing letters and magazines. On top of all this, announcements were being bellowed over a P.A.

system by a guy who sounded like he had a mouthful of mush. To this day, the older self does not know what that voice was saying.

Sort the flats, high to low, is an old time instruction to carriers.

My first training

The younger self was assigned to a letter carrier for training. In those days, training was defined as, "Follow me, kid. Do what I tell you to do and watch me." Then, like all old timers, the letter carrier then lit up a coffin nail and placed it in the cigarette holder, which was attached to the mail case. He then gave the younger self a stack of

I was told the first day on the job is the hardest.

magazines from one of the shelves and said, "sort these flats, high to low." When the younger self finished, the letter carrier handed over another stack of magazines to be sorted. This routine was repeated over some two dozen times, until every pile of magazines had been sorted.

Finally, to the street

After about four hours, the letter carrier took the younger self to the route. The letter carrier gave the

younger self a block to deliver. Whilst the younger self delivered that one block as a trainee, the letter carrier delivered two blocks and returned to see how the younger

I've witnessed many changes in the delivery of mail.

self was doing. The younger self was about three-quarters done. The letter carrier waited patiently and told the younger self not to worry, that the first day on the job was the hardest. It took many more days before the younger self appreciated the wisdom inherent in those words.

Finally, some perspective

Now, as an aging man, I am looking back to the experiences of that younger self that I was to access what kind of man I have become. I look back at how self-conscious

I look back to the younger self for perspective.

that younger man was, and how he learned things about himself through these many years. I have witnessed many changes in the processing of mail. I have even witnessed the redefinition of what is mail, given that e-mail, so prevailing in the first decade of the 21st century, was not even a concept two score years ago, in the last third of the 20th century.

I have memories not only of those with whom I served, but also of those whom I served. While there have been some rough waters in both categories, some of the deep-

What kind of man will I be at the end of my career?

est and most meaningful relationships of my life have been in both categories. Some of those relationships are still in the works.

What happens now?

Now, as the organization where I have expended the better part of my adult life, and the most productive years in my working life, I am trying to look to the future in

Others have faced changes without being certain of the future.

order to seek some clarity about where things are going. How will events over which I have little control or influence affect me and those around me? Where will I be and what will I be doing over the next few years, and how will I end up?

(continued on page 11)

McAdoo (continued from page 10)

Sexagenarian soon

One advantage of being on the verge of becoming a sexagenarian is that I know that though others before me have not faced the changes I am facing, those before me have nonetheless had to face change, whether it was the elimination of twice a day delivery in the 1940's, or the introduction of ZIP codes in the 1960's.

As stated throughout this opus, I realize I was once a different man. As I look to the future, I realize I will be a different man again due to time, experience, and events. My trepidation is about what kind of man I will be at the end of my career.

I find comfort in knowing I am not alone.

ACTIVE CARRIERS RELAX



Photos by Ron Calluag and Cherry Vargas

Corte Madera steward Arnold Jones, right, son Ray with his girlfriend, Jargea at the annual lunch.



Albert Ma and Kian McCarthy at the annual lunch, December 2008.



Maria Knudsen, Veronica Becerra and Allan Mercado at annual lunch.

Things to worry about when retired.

The economy and a new President

By Ivars Lauersons, Editor

When I started in the post office as a casual, a supervisor told me that an indicator of the shape of the economy was whether people were quitting the post office to take other jobs. When things were good there was a steady movement to other jobs. When things were bad, nobody quit. I suspect that at the moment, nobody is quitting.



Job security high

Our jobs as letter carriers are relatively safe, even in this economy, although the abolition of routes and the lengthening of existing ones reflect the decline of mail volume within a battered economy. Over-time, as a way to increase your salary, is also gone. The pressure to work harder and faster is affecting every carrier, sometimes making the workload impossible. The carriers' response, as indicated in article after article, is to work safely and follow all rules and regulations.

Thrift plan can go down

This does not mean that we are not further affected by the economic downturn. Any employees contributing to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) as an additional source

The value of the thrift plan can go down, as we now know.

of savings or retirement money, has been affected negatively unless they have been 100% in government funds. If you're in the stock market, you're down about 40%. If you're a homeowner, your house is worth considerably less than it was a year ago. So even though we have a secure job, we're not as well off as we were.

Security of retirement money

This brings us to another aspect of working for the post office, a secure and safe retirement package. If you worked under the Civil Service Retirement System, you get a fixed amount, based on your years of service, and

any deductions you make. This amount is unaffected by a downturn in the economy, and has a cost of living clause that can go up, but not down. Any funds that you invested

A government job suddenly seems desirable.

in TSP were optional and unrelated to the basic pension payment, and how well you did depends on the mix of funds you chose.

If you are retired under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS), the TSP was an essential part of your retirement funds, along with Social Security and the post office portion. What you thought you had as secure retirement funds may not be as abundant as they were.

Can the post office disappear

There is an additional worry about the post office itself surviving as a viable institution. There we are lucky that we now have a labor friendly President in the White

We have friends in Congress and the Presidency.

House, rather than a privatizer. Remember that President George Bush tried to partially privatize Social Security. Imagine yourself as a FERS retiree depending on a probably diminished TSP, and a certain lower Social Security benefit. We have friends in Congress who have rejected scare calls from Postmaster Jack Potter to downsize the post office to a five day delivery and eliminate jobs.

As a plug for our political action committee (COLCPE), we have worked with Congress to ensure the election of representatives who would listen to our

We don't know how the post office will survive technological changes.

concerns. During the second week in March we have a group of carriers lobbying our supporters and opponents in Washington, D.C.

The signs we get are of a change to support labor issues. In an article in the *New York Times* of March 2, 2009, there is a list of actions and appointments that are labor friendly.

The biggest hope is passing the Employee Free Choice Act, giving unions a better chance to organize workers. More on this later.

Garshol (continued from front page)

to another is complicated beyond belief by management's insane preoccupation with data.

When I started delivering in San Leandro in 1973, there was very little paperwork done by management, and there were two supervisors at the Main and one at South

Postal bureaucracy is dragging the post office down.

Station. Now there are at least three most days at Main, and two at South Station. At my old station, the stories I'm hearing make it sound like one manager specializes in paper work, and the other in psychologically tormenting the work force, by excessive nitpicking and micro-management.

Meaning of retirement

The single greatest part of being retired for me is not having to deal with morons who, universally and delusionally, believe that they are geniuses. This phenomenon has always been best described as "arrogance masking ignorance," and it is an unbelievable relief to no longer have it be part of my daily experience.

The financial reality

This core relationship is also part of the Postal Service's financial pickle.

It has an excessive number of managers who are really not accountable for their actions. If management's bonus (or whatever phony name they use to make their bonuses seem more tasteful) had, as a chief component, some sort of accountability for grievance activity in their unit, the Postal Service would realize huge savings. Also, the

It was an unbelievable relief to no longer have to daily deal with management.

excessive nitpicking and micro-management caused by way too many bosses only annoy people, and tends to make them hate the Postal Service by making a simple job unnecessarily stressful. People work harder when they feel like they are part of a team trying to "win one for the gipper". They don't work harder when they are made to feel isolated by some 'tool' who tells them they don't have enough flats on their arm, or that they are taping letters.

In the short term, the only solution is to protect yourself. This means to work safely at all times. The sad truth here is that when you are injured, management will try to blame you and discipline you for the accident. During

We have a simple job made complicated by extra paperwork.

your recovery, if you are unable to work, you are going to be under the observation of Postal Inspectors who want to find some little violation of your medical restrictions, so that they fire you for fraud. If, when you recover, you can't go back to full duty, management has programs in place now to take your job away, and set you up with employment outside the Postal Service.

Emphasize personal safety

What should be happening to us now is an increased emphasis on your personal safety at all times. The simplest thing anyone can do is to stop working with flats on your arm while delivering mail. This may slow you down somewhat, but it will also give you greater visibility of

The simplest safety action you can take is to deliver flats from the pouch.

your surroundings, allow you a free hand to use for the railing when you ascend or descend stairs. The sad, sorry truth is that you have no friends in postal management, especially when you need one. So by cutting down the slips, trips and falls and protecting yourself, you will be prolonging your postal career and preserving your only asset, your body, in case the Postal Service goes belly up.

If you need a friend, support the union

And finally, support your union, the only real support you have on that job. Support them in their efforts to protect your financial well being in Washington and by giving to COLCPE. The fight for legislative protection is far from over. And support your local union to try and cut down the harassment by supporting your shop steward. Be a witness who will give a statement when you observe behavior by management that has no place in a healthy work environment. Remember, when management is harassing the carrier in the next case, you could be next.

Let's talk to each other

Website for postal workers in tough times

By Cathy Simonson, Carrier, Napoleon Street

Every day on the radio, as I drive to work I listen to all the bad news about the economy. When I get to work, I see the declining volume and I see my co-workers being scheduled for less and less hours of work. When I get home, I turn on the news and all they talk about is our

There are no fees and no obligations.

sour financial state, the unemployment numbers, the foreclosures and the ways people have to cope and adapt to less money and more debt.

Coping on the internet

With this in mind, I have created a group on Google that is meant to be used as a tool for postal employees of all crafts in the SF bay area. Just picture a Craigslist for postal workers (without the Men and Women ads). It is called SF Bay Area Postal. I have a flyer and a sign up sheet if you would like to join, or just check it out. There are no fees, no obligations to participate, although that would be the purpose. You can unsubscribe at any time.

We can post things we need to sell or give away; places we need to rent or are searching for, websites that are money savers and money wise tips and ideas to help each other.

Ideas for use

With postal facilities closing in the near future, employees will have to travel or relocate. If you are willing to carpool you can post on the group website. Maybe you have a skill or do odd jobs. Maybe your son or daughter, wife or husband is looking for a job. If you know of a job opening in your neighborhood, maybe you can help another by posting it on the message board. You never know you, may find something you need, or just get a good feeling knowing you have done something that may help others in these hard times. You don't need a Google account to join the group. Email notices can be set up

so you can get updates daily as they come or in a combined email or not at all.

2009 is going to be a long tough year on our pocket-books and we need any and all resources available to make it through. If you have any suggestions on postings or additional pages or files I can add, please share them

The site is open to all crafts.

with me or on the group site. This site is not specific to letter carriers and is open to all crafts.

Thank you.

The website address is:

<http://groups.google.com/group/sf-bay-area-postal->

Or you can email directly. Just put 'Join' in the subject line. You will receive a no reply email from Google groups with a link to the site.

Group email: sf-bay-area-postal-@googlegroups.com

Moderator email: [Red HotChiliPepper41@gmail.com](mailto:RedHotChiliPepper41@gmail.com)

SF BAY AREA POSTAL AT GOOGLE

Announcing a New Google Group for SF Bay Area Postal people

<http://groups.google.com/group/SF-Bay-Area-Postal->

You don't need a Google account to join the group.

In these tough economy times we need a postal Google group so we can: post ideas, set up carpools, advertise a side business, sell items, rent out spaces, suggest websites. Use it like a mini Craigslist within the SF Bay Area. To join go to the website above or email the moderator at RedHotChiliPepper41@gmail.com.



GOLDEN GATE BRANCH 214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO
 2310 Mason Street, Fourth Floor
 San Francisco, California 94133
 415-362-0214 • 800-4BR-0214 • Fax 415-392-NALC



TO: Winifred Groux
Manager San Francisco District
P.O. Box 885050
1300 Evans (Room 300)
San Francisco, CA 94188-5050

FAX#: (415) 550-5327

December 30, 2008

Dear Winnie:

At our December branch meeting, a motion was passed unanimously mandating NALC Branch 214 to write you requesting the following as it is stated in the actual resolution which I have attached for your reference:

- 1) "That the following personnel be terminated: Adam Alvarez, Noemi Luna, Raj Sanghera, Gary Schrecengost, David Sullivan."
- 2) "That the USPS postpones the National Reassessment Program until it can be determined how the program can move forward in a way that is without prejudice and will not cause harm to USPS employees and their families."

I would appreciate a response to these requests. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Lili Beaumont
 President

cc: Postmaster General
 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
 Washington, DC 20260
 (202) 268-2000

Go to our website www.nalcbayarea.com for the full text of the resolution and the complete EEO decision.

GOLDEN GATE BRANCH NO. 214
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO
2310 MASON ST., THIRD FLOOR
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94133

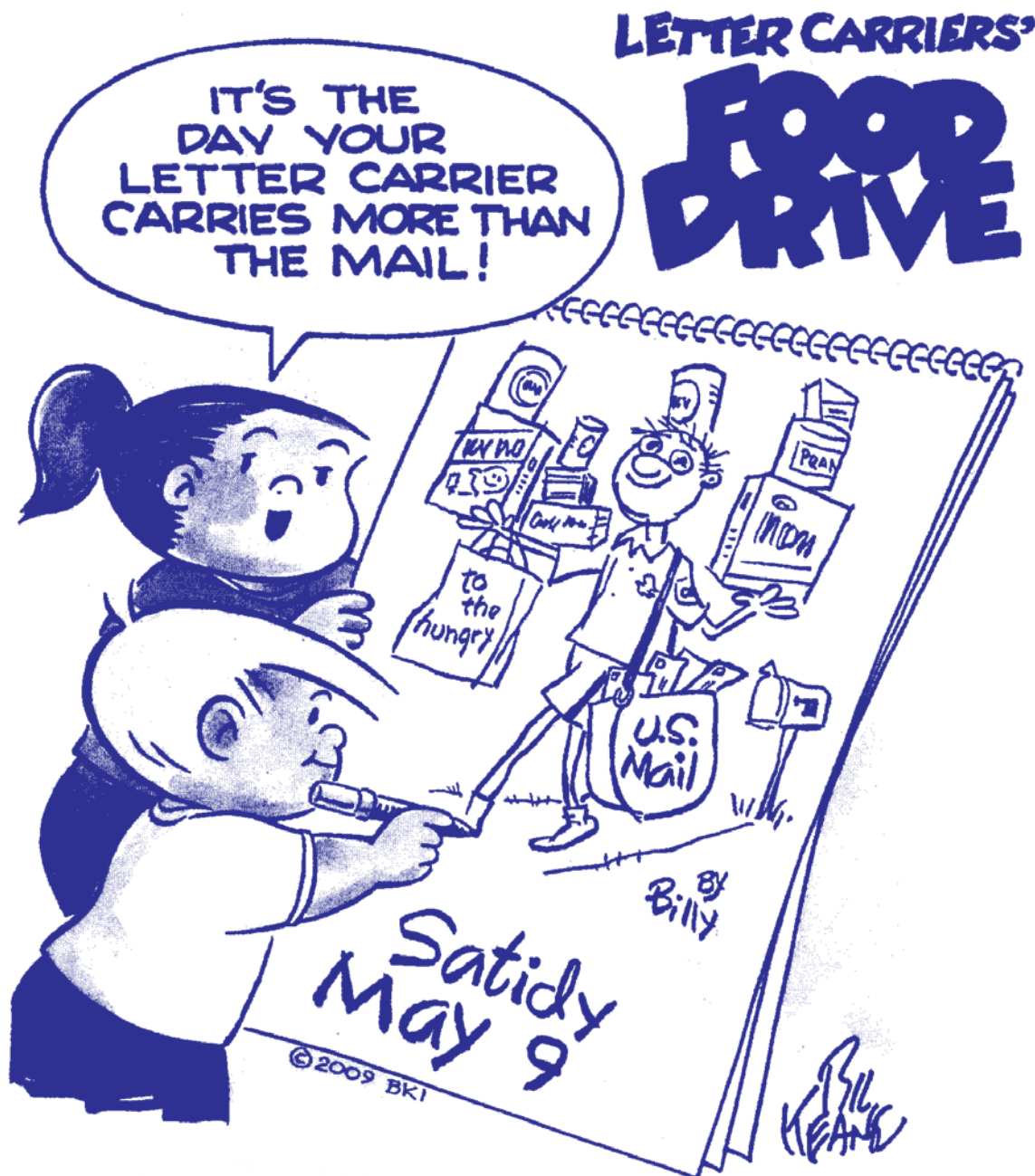


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