



# THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS      BRANCH #214  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

January/February 2007

Award-winning newspaper

Vol. XXXVII, No. 1

## THE BRANCH MOURNS

### *Deaths in the family*

By Bill Thornton, Vice President

The vigil at on Bryant Street in front of Bryant Annex had a warm communal feeling as people mourned and remembered the passing of cherished fellow employees and friends, to mourn in a dignified way, creating a feeling that we are not alone in our grief.

The vigil was in response to violent deaths of a carrier and a carrier supervisor from 180 Napoleon.

But the gathering was not without anger. For many, the gathering was a spotlight on the Postal Service's treatment of employees and such treatments' dire consequences. The dominant conclusion, largely un-rebutted,

#### **A vigil mourned the passing of two fellow employees**

was that the postal service had done what it has rightly or wrongly been accused of; abuse of employees, and two people were dead.

The vigil itself was controversial, in the tradition of Branch 214. The decision of members to hold it was passed at the December Branch meeting by about 2 votes. Fewer than 50 people decided what was to be done, the number of members left at the meeting at the time. This is one of the idiosyncrasies of union democracy, or of democracy itself. Small percentages of total members decide these things. Such issues as the vigil come under *New Business* at union meetings, late in the meeting, after some attendees have drifted out.

The location was also questioned. 15th and Bryant was chosen for reasons of public visibility, etc.

One 180 Carrier asked me why it was not held at 180 Napoleon, since the sister and brother were from there.

All good questions.

During the discussion prior to the vote, several steward/activists from 180 Napoleon argued that in consideration of the feelings of the families that any union activity related to the tragedy should be delayed.

Whether there was any actual connection between management behavior and the tragedy, carriers are unhappy



Photo by Bobby Castro

*The vigil at 15th and Bryant, San Francisco.*

about the current climate at work and the occurrences of deadly violence in the Postal Service.

#### **Is working for the Postal Service Dangerous?**

Prominent killings have occurred in the Postal Service and the phrase *Going Postal* became part of the lexicon. A former U.S. Postal Service employee shot and killed five postal workers at a mail processing plant in Goleta, Calif., on Jan. 30 2006 before killing herself.

The last shooting at a postal facility was in April 1998, when a letter carrier killed a postal clerk in Dallas.

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### OTHER COMMENTS:

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## Branch 214 notes

Welcome new stewards: **Roland Menis** (Steiner), **Ray Menis** (Steiner), **Richard Beutler, Jr.** (Redwood City), **George Evangelista** (Redwood City), **Joe Luna** (Bel-Tib), **Eldridge Pooler** (San Leandro Main), **Steve McCaffree** (Sunset PCA), **Menandro "Doy" Mitra** (Rincon East), **Jerome Tercero** (Rincon South).

\* \* \*

Welcome new alternate stewards: **James Yeung** (Parkside).

Steward elections were held at **Redwood City** on October 26 and 27, 2006. The results of the votes: **George Evangelista** (69), **Enrique Larouche** (23). George Evangelista elected as steward.

Steward elections were held at **Steiner Station** on November 2 and 3, 2006. The results of the votes:

### Branch Officers

Lili Beaumont ..... President  
 Ray Fong ..... Executive Vice-President  
 Bill Thornton ..... Vice-President  
 Cherry Vargas ..... Secretary-Treasurer  
 Juan Dominguez ..... Field Director  
 Carol Maggio ..... Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
 Leonard Cruz ..... Sergeant-at-Arms  
 Franklin Woo ..... NALC Health Benefits  
 Karen Schuler ..... Safety and Health  
 Cathy Simonson ..... EEO Officer  
 Mike Callahan ..... MBA representative  
 Kim Truong ..... Director of Organization  
 June Buccat ..... Trustee  
 Kathleen McConnell ..... Trustee  
 Sheila Gardner ..... Trustee

### Voice Staff

Ivars Lauersons ..... Editor  
 Gerry Lee ..... Graphics

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**Roland Menis** (30), **John Stewart** (19). Roland Menis elected as steward.

Steward elections held at **San Leandro Main** on December 28 and 29, 2006. The results are **Eldridge Pooler** (48), **Yang Yang** (32), and **Andrew Taylor** (10). Eldridge Pooler elected as steward.

Route protection classes will be scheduled in **February** 2007. Please refer to local bulletins for dates and locations. Emphasis on following zones: 94122, 94121, 94131, and San Leandro South.

\* \* \*

### Carriers seeking mutual trades:

**Novato, CA.** Grade 1 regular (4/2004 seniority), seeks mutual transfer to Daly City. Please call Jin Yi Zhang @ 415 508-8051 after 7:00 PM.

**San Francisco, CA.** Grade 1 (11/2000 seniority), seeks mutual transfer to Daly City. Please call Enrico @ 415 505-3442.

**Daly City, CA.** PTF (7/2003 seniority) seeks mutual transfer to San Leandro. Please call Yan Zhu @ 510 351-2580 or 415 378-4174.

\* \* \*

This is the last time the logo of The Western Labor Communications Association will appear in **The Voice**.

The organization represented the labor press in the Western United States. A decline in membership and a change in the media contributed to its demise.

The annual contest produced many winners from **Voice** contributors. I will personally miss the Western boot that is part of the logo. I fondly remember it when the organization was called the Western Labor Press Association, and a lot of the editors came from the cigar-smoking, whisky-drinking background of two-fisted editing. So long, pardners. —*Ivars Lauersons*

\* \* \*

Our thanks to **Cherry Vargas** for help in getting this issue to you. Taking photos, scanning, e-mailing, recovering data, all the neat stuff, her knowledge and doing. The errors are made by the editor.

Thanks also to **Herb Mitchell** for the use of his modern computer workroom.

### T.V. 214 Schedule

**SAN FRANCISCO, AT&T Cable Channel 29:**  
**Every third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.**  
**February 18, 2007, March 18, 2007**  
**April 15, 2007**

Looking for the silver lining

## How to survive work—again

By Lili Beaumont, President

The most recent Pacific Area driven route inspections and adjustments have definitely taken its toll on labor-management relationships on the workroom floor, as well as within the leadership. In fact, now that local management is mandated to hold to these adjustments, the conflicts between carriers and their supervisors have escalated because many supervisors have decided it better for them to force and impose



non-sensible directives – received from upper management – on to the carriers rather than to question the validity of these directives, and how these orders could really affect the morale and daily operations of their employees. Furthermore, many of the supervisors do not know how to carry out these directives professionally. They believe the only way to do

it and make the “numbers” for their bosses is to harass, intimidate, and/or discipline their employees until the employees feel so beaten up, or fearful of losing their jobs, that they will do anything that management tells them to do even if it means violating the contract.

### Afraid to file grievances

In fact, in some pockets of our branch, these carriers have become so fearful that they are reluctant or resistant to filing grievances because they are afraid to call attention to themselves. So there is no paper trail

### The route inspections have taken a toll on the workroom floor.

of management’s mistreatment of carriers because there are no grievances. Management gets away with their unprofessional conduct and the end result is a very stressful work environment for carriers. This manner of how management conducts business has to end. But the only way we can stop it is if we, as individual members, stand together in unionism, and work together to impose our hard fought contractual rights.

### Right to harassment-free workplace

Through the National Agreement, we have a right to a harassment free workplace. Management’s conduct towards all employees is addressed in several handbooks and manuals, as well as in our contract. But we need to

stick up for ourselves as well as for our fellow co-workers when a supervisor or station manager makes an inappropriate request or remark to us. Presently, many of these remarks go unchallenged, or action to correct them is not done in a timely manner, giving management the false notion that these actions are not a serious issue to us, and that they will not be held accountable for how they treat their employees.

When you feel you have been treated unfairly in any respect, or if you see another co-worker who has been

### To make the numbers, they harass, intimidate and discipline.

spoken to inappropriately, you need to immediately ask to see your shop steward as well as write down everything that has just occurred. At this point you have done your part and the rest is up to your stewards to investigate this issue and, if there is merit to this complaint, they must file an appropriate grievance on the manager’s conduct and/or any other standard that was violated. To be effective, these grievances must be filed in an expedited fashion on every violation that has been found to have merit. It is the only way we can make management understand that we are serious about enforcing our rights. But we must file a grievance on every contractual violation they commit.

To combat these management tactics and to reverse their direction, we plan to better educate our stewards and membership on how they can better enforce our National Agreement when management violates our rights. To strengthen your representation we have requested special stewards’ training to be conducted by our National Business Agent’s office. In addition, we will be sending many of our stewards to the upcoming CSALC-NBA training session in March. We will also conduct future branch steward schools on how to handle these situations, and follow-up on conditions in the stations which have increased grievance activity in issues of management misconduct, as well as work-hour/work-load conflicts.

### Union unknown

The union can provide all the “know your contractual rights” training and resources available to fend off management, but if individual members choose not to attend the trainings, or break-time meetings, or after-work meetings offered, or if they choose not to use the information shared at these gatherings, then management will prevail in their bullying tactics. No carriers should ignore or give up any of their contractual rights. Those carriers who ignore their rights contribute to the day when management permanently takes away those hard fought contractual rights. The union is always available to protect those rights by filing grievances and establishing a history of

*(continued on page 4)*

*In memoriam*

## Kevin “Julius” Tartt

By Danny Urtiaga, Visitacion

When Julius came to the post office 18 years ago, he was quite the happy go lucky, laid back type of guy. Nothing ever appeared to faze him, always laughing and never out of sorts. Shortly afterwards, we had route adjustments. One of the routes at Visitacion on my T-6 assignment, 3407, was affected in that part of the splits were given to Julius on his route. The regular on that route, Riel Calvin and I informed Julius of a certain condition regarding an elderly person, Louise Malcom, whose mail we delivered to her door instead of her mailbox at the side of her house. A few days later, while we were loading up to go to the street, I asked him how it was going with the adjustment and route conditions. He said all was fine except that dear Ms. Malcom keep calling him “Junior”.

He politely reminded her that his name was Julius. To this, Ms. Malcom replied, “Yes, I know, but I like Junior better.” Being the respectful young man towards his elders he was, he just shrugged off the matter.

Our relationship on the workroom floor was consistently one of playful “jive”. Being a staunch Denver Bronco fan, and my being a devoted Rams aficionado, we had our share of bantering and badgering that to an outsider might appear to be more than good natured kidding. When all was said and done, it was all good. I knew and know that, as it was then, and as it is now, that is why Julius in his being and in his passing remains precious.

**Beaumont** (continued from page 3)

management’s unwillingness to follow our contract. It is not a “quick fix” but it is very effective if all carriers utilize our grievance procedure. If, in a workplace of twenty carriers, fifteen individuals each file a grievance on one supervisor’s conduct, it will surely catch the attention of that supervisor’s bosses, versus if only one carrier files a grievance. It will also be very difficult for that supervisor to “pay specific attention to” or “retaliate” against fifteen carriers directly for filing their grievances versus retaliating against one carrier.

All we need to do is stand up for ourselves, and stand up for each other, when we are wronged by management. All it takes is a request for five minutes to speak to your shop steward, or to make a telephone call to the union office. In times like these we need to support each other and work together for a common good to protect the rights and benefits of all of our membership.

## JULIUS

*In earthly terms, yours seemed a modest amount  
Though time allowed was our lord’s final count  
And now, obligingly answering that being the final call  
A response to be made by us, one and all  
Rise above your earthly cares  
Your trials and tribulations, your toils and snares  
Go above these earthly grounds  
Where as mere mortals, we make our rounds  
Elevate beyond technology and its deafening roar  
And over the mountain tops, where eagles soar  
Exceeding our horizons, the universe, and more  
Where the envisioned tunnels end, is heavens front door  
There chiming bells rhythmically ring  
And Angelic voices harmoniously sing  
Therefore tranquility reigns with perpetual bliss  
Sealed with the blessings of the Almighty’s kiss  
Go there now, Brother, you’ve earned the right  
Having fulfilled your earthly plight  
We’ll see you soon, though God only knows when  
But on that day...Julius...We’ll meet again*

Being Chicano, my education was predominantly in English. My maternal tongue and means of expression were in Spanish. In essence when I speak in English, those words come from my head. When I speak in Spanish, those words come from my heart. Having conveyed that, my final words to Julius...

**Vaya con Dios, carnal, y que descanses en paz y el cariño del señor.**

**Weingarten Rights**—Federal labor laws, in what is known as the Weingarten rule, gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which he or she reasonable believes may lead to discipline. The steward cannot exercise Weingarten rights on the employee’s behalf. And unlike “Miranda rights,” which involves criminal investigations, **the employer is not required to inform the employee of the Weingarten right to representation. It is up to the individual to invoke such.**

If you are called into the office for an investigatory interview by your supervisor, postal inspector or inspector general, invoke your rights under Weingarten. If management denies you your right to a union representative, you must follow orders and go into the office, if requested by them, but you are not obligated to respond to any questions until such time you are provided a union representative.

—Ray Fong

Who's next?

## Playing postal roulette

By Juliette Chen, Golden Gate Station

*(This is part one of two parts.)*

By now, we have all heard of the deaths of Supervisor Genevieve Paez and Carrier Julius Tarrt in San Francisco. This was the third postal shooting within a year. The first one took place in Goleta, CA, on Jan. 30, 2006 when a former mail processor killed 6 co-workers and a neighbor, and then turned the gun on herself. The second incident took place on April 4 in Baker City, OR, when a veteran carrier killed a supervisor. And now the third case, which took place on Nov. 28, has hit home.

### Token gestures

As usual, postal management imposed a gag order on the entire workforce at our station. Flags at stations were flown at half-mast, the Postmaster herself offered grief counseling (Is she qualified?), our manager ordered a minute of silent prayer (Is that allowed?) at a stand-up talk. The EAP (Employee Assistance Program) number was given out—and universally ignored. The hypocrisy alone was enough to gag us. Immediately after all the ritual gestures and token formalities had taken place, it was

### Business-as-usual in today's Post Office means bullying workers until they break down.

back to business-as-usual, which in today's Post Office means bullying, harassing, and spying on workers until they break down in body and spirit—until someone, somewhere, is driven to pick up another gun. You don't need to be a psychic to predict that there will be other postal shootings. Certainly, the public has come to expect it from us: Another postal shooting—*yawn*— what else is new?

### Who cares?

So the public doesn't really care. We know the pols in Washington D.C. don't care. And for sure, the bean-counting thumb-suckers at (appropriately named) L'Enfant Plaza don't give a rodent's posterior. Why should they? It's not their brains spilled all over the workroom floor; it's not their blood staining the loading dock; it's not their bodies slumped over the steering wheel in the parking lot. *They* don't get to play the postal lottery—we do. Lucky us. Only craft employees and lower-level management are eligible to play. *No purchase necessary.*

### “Zero tolerance” = “zero interest”

It's pointless whining about what's “right” or “wrong”

to upper postal management; these people do not have an ethical construct or moral compass. Management policies about “zero tolerance” to violence in the workplace

### You don't need to be a psychic to predict that there will be other postal shootings.

and so forth are just blarney when they are the primary instigators of workplace violence. In postal management lingo, “zero tolerance” stands for “zero interest”. Until that happy day when management acknowledges its share of the blame in these killings, the violence will continue.

### Union needs help

So is there anything we can do to change the cycle of abuse and violence? Should we leave it all up to the union? The union is overwhelmed; it's the equivalent of

### A lot of information is going in the union but very little gets out.

the police force which has to fight the same criminals all over the map because they have no power to stop them or arrest them. The way I see it, the union is the bottleneck; a lot of information is going in but very little gets out. Shop stewards are so busy filing tip-of-the-iceberg grievances that they have little time to share vital information with workers. As a result, each station becomes a tribe isolated from the others.

### New year resolutions

Sharing information—*accurate* information—is empowering, which is why curtailing the freedom of the press is at the top of every tyrant's to-do list. How do we go about it? Here are a few suggestions:

### Sharing accurate information is empowering.

1) Make monthly union meetings available online, either as video-conferencing or (for those without computers) teleconferencing. The technology is neither expensive nor difficult, and the union has the expertise to set this up.

2) Supplement the bimonthly English edition of **The Voice** with summaries of important points in Chinese and Spanish, which can be available both online and in hard copy.

3) Schedule regular union meetings at each station at break time, for the steward to pass on important information. If it's not feasible for everyone to meet, then orga-

*(continued on page 6)*

**Chen** (continued from page 5)

nize a “buddy” system in which carriers can pass on such information to co-workers.

3) Fire abusive and incompetent management personnel. Start naming names and stop protecting the guilty. Start a network between stations to track these chronic

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**“This is a direct order” is the equivalent of slapping someone across the face.**

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offenders. Start gathering information and building a case against them for termination. The union, by law, is not allowed to give out confidential information, but there’s nothing to stop the rest of us from sharing information.

4) The union should conduct its own systematic and regular station survey, equivalent to management’s Voice of the Employees (VOE) survey. Once every year, the findings from the union’s surveys can be published and awards for “Worst Manager of the Year” or “Worst Supervisor of the Year” can be given out.

5) Enforce respect from management. Start by stripping management of provocative, aggressive language such as “This is a direct order”. Such language is not only highly disrespectful; it is downright dangerous, irresponsible and an outright incitement to violence. It’s the equivalent of slapping someone across the face.

If you look at the history of postal shootings, you’ll notice a pattern emerging—many of the shooters were longtime employees who had dedicated decades of their lives to the Post Office. To abusive managers or supervisors, 20 or 30 years of service means nothing; they would treat a veteran carrier with as little respect as they would a PTF or a casual worker. It’s EOA—Equal Opportunity Abuse. I’ve often noticed that some of the most intimidated workers are these longtime employees who, as other job prospects and options diminish over the

years, become increasingly fearful of jeopardizing their retirement. Violence happens when you systematically rob people of any pride, ownership and pleasure in their jobs.

6) Improve management recruitment and training. No other company of our size employs such dross in management. Any greenhorn PTF can join management and start issuing direct orders to workers who have had 30 years of experience. If this were the military, it’s the equivalent of having a raw recruit promoted to sergeant overnight. Is this any way to run one of the largest organizations in the world? In order to get rid of these losers, you need to go after those higher up in the food chain who are protecting them. For example, just because you carpool with the postmaster doesn’t mean you should be guaranteed lifetime employment and automatic, meritless promotions.

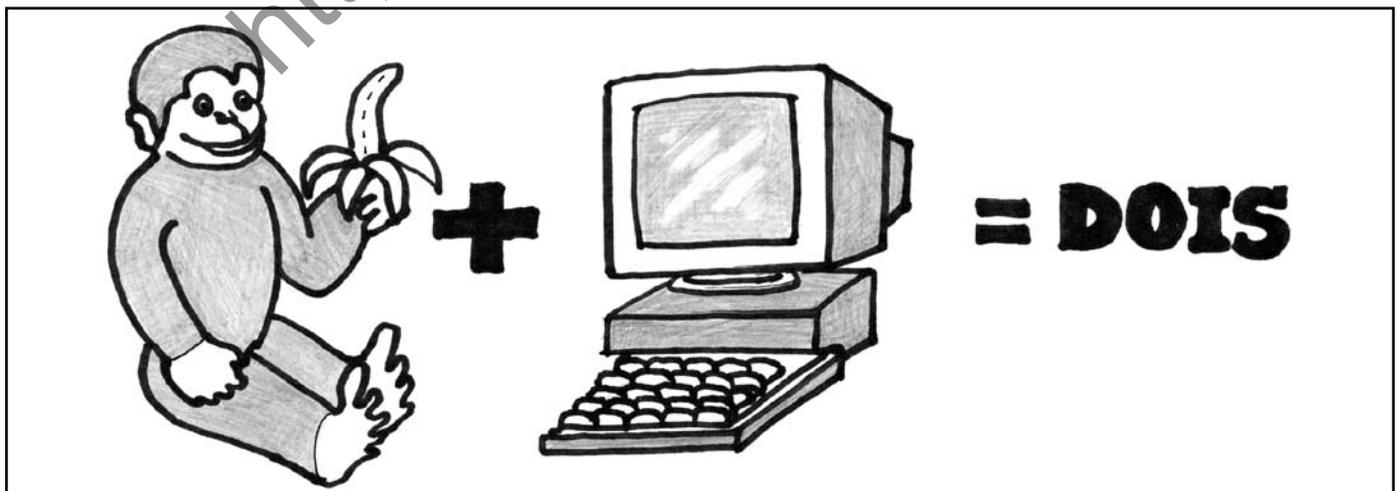
7) Reduce the constant surveillance and spying on workers. Management actively fosters a climate of paranoia through incessant surveillance. At our station, for instance, our acting manager spends entire mornings rooted to a spot—looking like one of those guano-speck-

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**Management actively fosters a climate of paranoia.**

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led plastic owls that usually has a carrier pigeon perched on its head—where she can watch us case our mail and pull down. (By the way, has anyone ever seen her blink? I know I haven’t.) In the afternoons, she and the supervisors are driving around spying on us on our routes. At my previous station, a particularly sorry specimen (who bore an unfortunate resemblance to a moustache-twirling cartoon villain) announced at a stand-up that carriers were “observed” spending too much time on their cell phones. I told “Boris Badenov” that carriers were on their cell phones trying to call the station where no one was picking up the phone because all the supervisors were ordered out on the streets to spy on us. (to be continued)



Juliette Chen

Novato report

## From the top to the toilet

By Karen Schuler, Safety and Health Officer

After the end of my first year as Safety and Health Officer for Branch 214, I have seen the commitment to safety in the San Francisco District go from "Safety First" to "Safety Last." This is no discredit to the safety specialists in this district.

They are well trained and committed to their jobs.



We worked in a station where we went from one of the worst offices to "Best in the West". This was achieved by a Novato Postmaster with a vision, fresh ideas and a commitment to the process. It was developed with the help of the safety team and the unions NALC and APWU. It was a system that empowered the committee members, it truly gave us the autonomy

to approach the members about safety in a positive way. Should I also say that it was corrective in nature, not punitive?

### From safety to concern about numbers

Since the route adjustments the emphasis has been about numbers. We now have a new OIC in Novato. It is

### At one time carriers were told to do their job safely.

rumoured that there is a bounty of \$250 offered to supervisors from other offices to come in and catch Novato carriers messing around. I guess this is how it works up in the countryside in Northern California. But for us city folks it's not really working at all. It is using outdated militaristic tactics that the postal service got rid of long ago. So I ask, why the comeback? It didn't work then, and it's not working now.

### Harassing older carriers publicly

The older injured employees are getting harassed about the pace of their work. I'm hearing, faster, faster, let's go. I've been walked with, and humiliated by my supervisor on numerous occasions. I have seen 60-year-old carriers who have been reduced to tears and too stressed out to do their job period, let alone safely. Now the supervisors are counting the older injured carriers and leaving negative reports lying on the desk for all to see. And they talk on the workroom floor for all to hear about how only the worst carriers are being counted.

Management is creating a very hostile working environment. It's rather ironic that when a few of the carriers put in for a special route count they were denied. I can't speak for all of the offices, and in some of the offices safety seems to be working. In my office our safety committee is pretty much history.

### Longer routes, more accidents

Quite honestly, it appears that the flavor of the year is numbers at any cost. The expense is to the craft employees. There are longer routes, more work, a sizeable degree

### Older carriers are publicly humiliated.

of harassment, and how about some discipline to go with it. Management can't understand then why the productivity is down and the number of accidents is up. This isn't rocket science. You do the math! The new regime of terror is in town. I am patient and hardworking and know this too shall pass. I have seen many changes come and go in my 20 year postal career.

I have always believed that a good leader leads by example. So why aren't the executive safety meetings happening? I was appointed to the Executive Safety Committee last year by National Business Agent Dale Hart. I have not yet been to a single meeting. What kind of message is this? I spoke with my friend Roland Garshol from San Leandro, who was appointed to the Bay Valley Executive Safety Committee. And what a big surprise; they are not meeting either! So here I am, disillusioned by the lack of commitment from the top. That is why safety is in the toilet. So I am asking, can't they pull their heads

### Is it possible to have a post office we would want to work for?

out of their a---? Can we get back to the basics, create an atmosphere of dignity and respect, and be the kind of postal service you would want to work for?

The **North Bay Labor Council** recently presented the Branch with a **plaque** thanking our local union for its very generous support of the Labor Council's 2006 Member to Member Campaign by loaning **Novato letter carrier Karen Schuler** to staff their phone bank and their GOTV effort.

Kudos to Karen for her efforts.

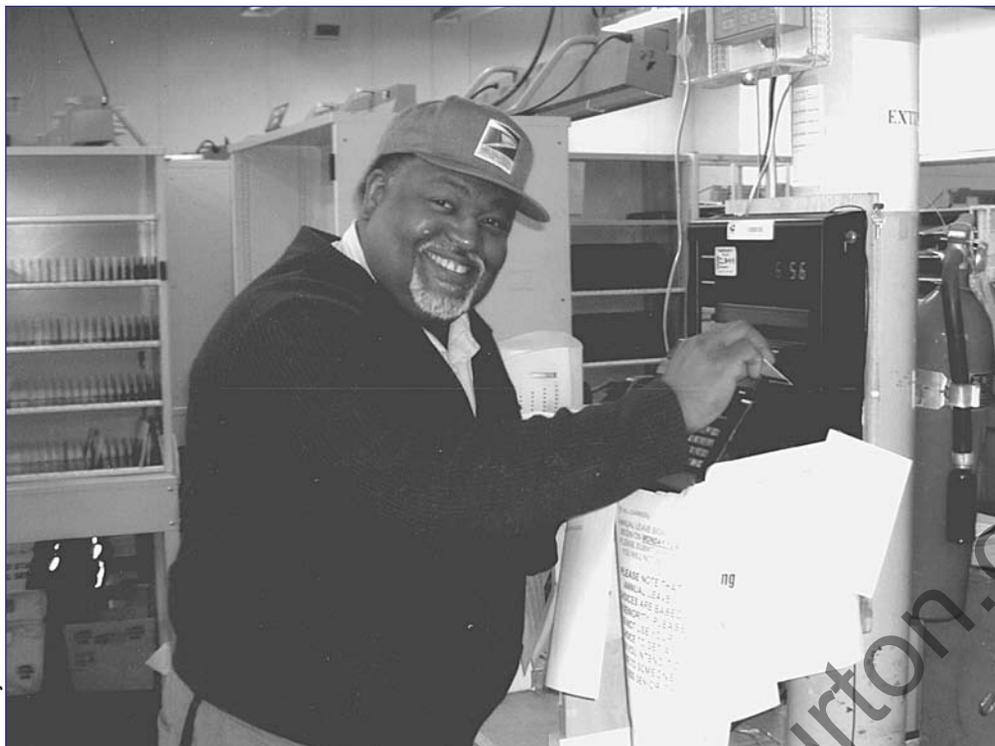


Photo by Rod Francis

*On December 1, 2006, a good friend of mine retired from the postal service. His name is Clinton "Danny" Armstrong. Danny is special in many ways, but what I'll always remember him for most is his broad smile and his love of music. Danny worked hard, not only as a dedicated postal worker, but more importantly, as a strong and dedicated union member. Even though he was harassed almost daily by San Leandro management, he never failed to be optimistic and positive. I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say, "We're going to miss you every day." Good luck in your retirement from your fellow union brothers and sisters in San Leandro.*

—Charles Gonzalez

## Contest for children

The Branch will be **having a contest for children** (12 and under) of Branch 214 letter carriers who submit a drawing of a **design for a new logo for our 2007 food drive T-shirt**. Applications with rules and guidelines for the contest will be disseminated at the February Branch Meeting.

## Scholarship offered

The Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund is pleased to announce applications for its 2007-08 scholarship program are now available. **Eligible applicants** are civilian federal and postal employees with at least three years of service, and their dependents. Dependent applicants must be full-time students in an accredited degree program and must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Employee applicants must meet the same academic criteria; however they may be part-time students. Additional qualifications are discussed **on FEEA's web site**. [www.feea.org/scholarships.html](http://www.feea.org/scholarships.html). A downloadable version of the application is also available on the web site. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than Friday, March 30, 2007.

## Branch 214 Meetings

### Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

February 7, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
March 7, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
April 4, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

### Steward meetings, 6:00 P.M.

February 7, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
March 7, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
April 4, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

### Retiree social meeting, 12:30 P.M.

February 5, 2007	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
April 2, 2007	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
June 4, 2007	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF

## IN MEMORIAM

Robert Dobie  
 Ben Foxie (*active carrier*)  
 Ron Magdaleno (*active carrier*)  
 Linda Padilla  
 Genevieve Paez  
 Robert L. Ritchie  
 Julius Tartt



Photo courtesy Pallera family

Marina letter carrier Janette Pallera gave birth to son Revel Jerric on January 5, 2007. He weighed in at 7 lbs. 9 oz., and was measured at 20 inches. Looking on proudly, from left, husband Eric, daughter Richelle, 18 years old, and daughter Jessere, 14.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Antonio, Amelia Paulette Enriquez (San Leandro)
- Blanco, Aida G. (San Leandro)
- Ceballo, Kathy M. ( San Leandro)
- Chantavong, Samantha Sang (San Rafael)
- Clarín, Maria Refugio (San Leandro)
- Crisostomo, Ariel De Venecia (San Leandro)
- Ho, Wilson T. (180 Napoleon)
- Hua, Richard (Novato)
- Kwok, Hyatt (180 Napoleon)
- Lau, Mark Kasin (Daly City)
- Lee, Joyce Kit-Ling (San Leandro)
- Lee, Wood Moon (180 Napoleon – Stonestown)
- Lwin, Soe Soe (Sausalito)
- Manalo, Renier (PCA)
- Mason, Terry (Daly City)
- Pagdanganan, Reynaldo Alalay (San Leandro)
- Pelaez, Rolando Quirit (Steiner)
- Sana, Rommel Peralta (Novato)
- Singh, Nirmal (San Leandro)
- Valdefiera, Edmundo De Ocampo (Daly City)

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*The mailman asks*

## Why can't we deliver the mail anymore?

By Ivars Lauersons, Editor

Speaking as a postal customer, I am worried when I get no mail delivery at all, or when I get delivery at 9 at night, and when I get my neighbor's mail on a regular basis.



Speaking as a postal customer, I am worried when I hear similar complaints while standing in line to buy stamps.

Speaking as a postal customer, I am worried when sitting in a doctor's waiting room I see a non-uniformed person put some mail on the counter, with the receptionist picking it up and saying, "This mail belongs to the next building."

When asked, the casual carrier says that he has to deliver a different route each day, and that he is pressed for time.

### A wrong delivery should be an uncommon experience.

When the receptionist says that this happens all the time, speaking as a postal customer, I ask if she has complained to the post office. She says she has, and nothing has changed. She does say there is one person who gets the mail delivery right.

#### When we can't get it right

When the perception takes hold that the post office cannot deliver the mail, and we are already under the opprobrium of "snail mail," then all the automation, all

### The post office is in business to deliver, repeat, deliver the mail.

the customer connect, all the advertising, all the management bonuses will not help our attempt to stay competitive. The catch phrase is already "Fed-Ex it" for overnight delivery, not "send it express mail."

#### End product in the delivery

Speaking now as a letter carrier, the post office has forgotten that its basic task is to deliver the mail. This is our end product, this is where we succeed or fail.

I hope that ignoring the end product is an oversight of methodology and collecting data, but I fear that it is a philosophy of current postal management. Apparently, an

### The phrase should be "express mail it," not "Fed-Ex it."

accuracy of delivery of 98% is acceptable. If customers find misdeliveries common, rather than unusual to the extreme, it seems to be all right with management.

Part of the problem is that not all misdeliveries are reported. Certainly not all missed deliveries are reported. So maybe to upper management it is not a problem, or a large problem. It should be a major problem.

The new management style of delivery by what's written on paper, or the computer, instead of what's realistic is common. Lower management lies about the hours they will use, and upper management receiving the reports pretends to believe them.

#### Who cares approach

But the "who cares about deliveries" approach seems part of management philosophy. Take two examples from real life. When routes were adjusted in San Francisco, the first delivery was on one side of the street of a business block, but the businesses on the other side of the street would not get their mail until the end of the route, 4 or 5 hours later. When this was pointed out, at first no action was taken. It took persistent complaints by the carriers and customers to make changes.

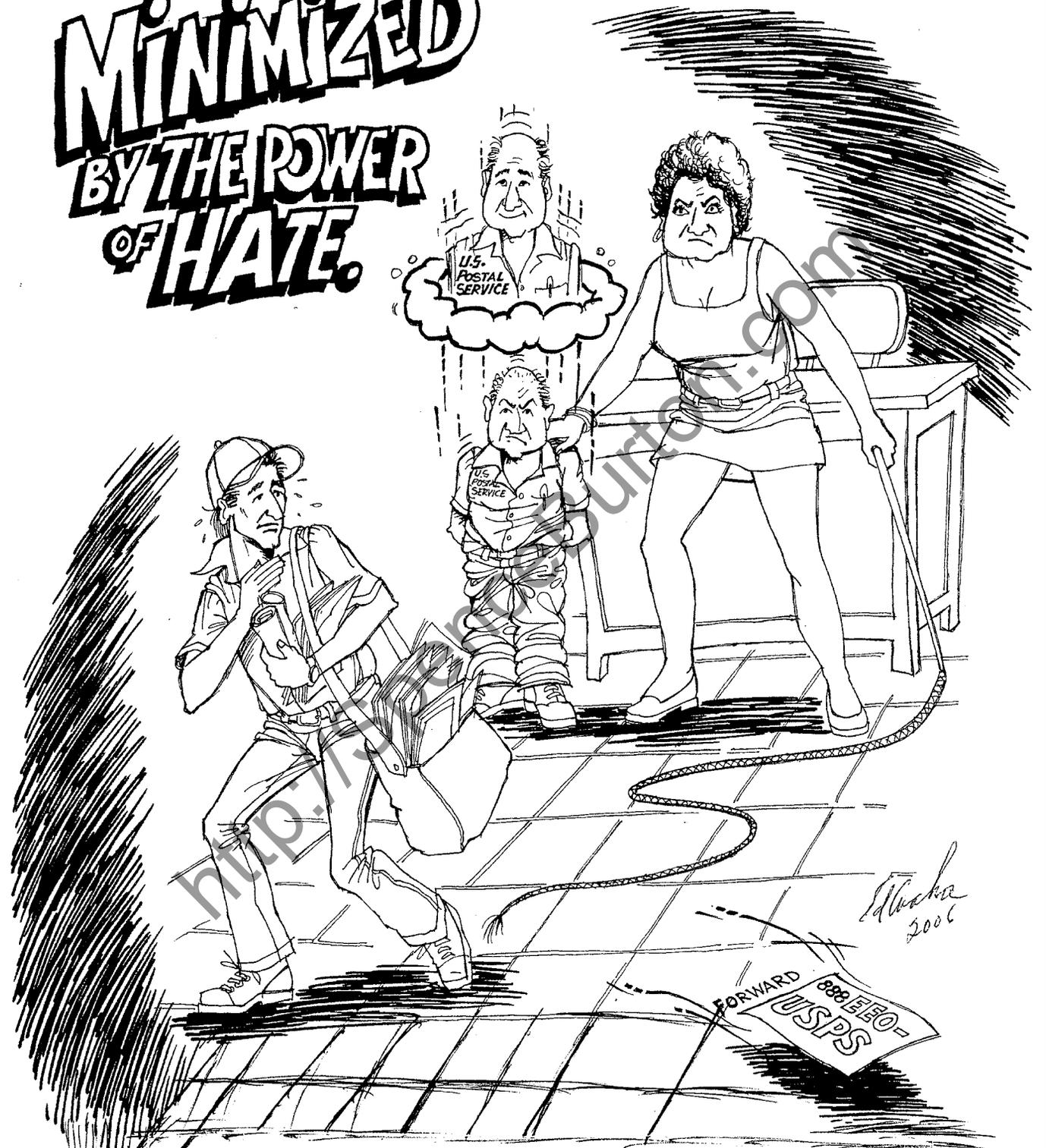
#### The casual approach

Another example is how casual carriers are trained to deliver mail. They are given two days instruction and then set out to deliver only. They cannot read or understand "vacant," the difference between apartment 301 and 302. If the customer is away for a couple of days, the wrong mail will sit in the wrong box, misdelivered and delayed. There is no commitment by management to get quality delivery from these lower paid workers, nor any concern.

When we work in the post office, we know in how many places things can go wrong. It's like watching sausage being made. But the end product of accurate delivery was not a worry. Postal workers sent bills and cards with no concern. Should we now switch to e-mail and on-line payments? The erosion is already underway, but we don't have to help it along by ignoring the problem.

Make daily delivery a goal of management, and correct it immediately if it is not done. If misdeliveries are found, correct them by good training or adequate delivery time. Take care of delivering our business customers' mail as early as possible.

# MINIMIZED BY THE POWER OF HATE.



**IF YOU DON'T LIVE ON THE EDGE, QUOTE,  
YOU ARE TAKING UP TOO MUCH SPACE!**

**Thornton** (continued from page 1)

Previous shootings at postal facilities in Edmond, Okla., in 1986 and Royal Oak, Mich., in 1991 took 18 lives.

From 1985 to early 1998, 35 postal employees were killed by their co-workers — the job doesn't even make the top 10 list for workplace violence, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

The incidents spawned a stereotype of postal workers as violence-prone and psychotic. The Postal Service's Commission on a Safe and Secure Workplace-*Califano Report* in August 2000, funded by the Postal Service, found postal workers are no more violent than workers in other professions. Postal workers were only one third as likely as those in the national work force to be victims of homicide at work and, indeed, that postal workers, when you look at homicides by occupations, working in the Postal Service is about as safe as it gets. It's almost as safe as being in the professions. The only industries safer are construction and manufacturing, in terms of homicides.

*Califano* was flawed from the beginning. While acknowledging that while postal workers are not statis-

### Deadly incidents spawned a stereotype of psychotic and violence-prone postal workers.

tically at greater risk than those in other industries but generally unhappy, the focus was more on the potential of individuals to commit violence than underlying problems on the work room floor. This is similar to the focus of Postal Service *Threat Assessment Teams*, which is narrow. *Califano* also gave almost equal responsibility to the management and unions for problems!

The CDC-Center for Disease Control gathers statistics on workplace dangers in various occupations and found that instances of co-worker violence in the Postal Service occurred at similar rates to averages in other workplaces. The job was safer than many but the statistics on co-worker violence was about average for occupations in general.

Rather than look at the root cause of the problem (abusive managers), the Report's focus was preventing abused employees from becoming violent.

#### An unhappy workplace

#### The road to abuse—reasons may be subtle

There is a grueling, daily stressful, anxiety ridden work

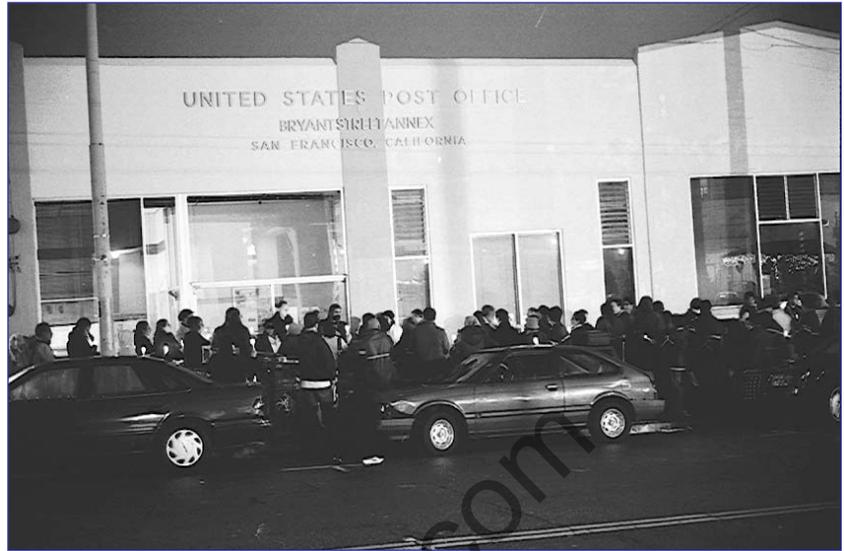


Photo by Bobby Castro

*The candlelight vigil at Bryant Street Station (Mission Annex), San Francisco, received print and television coverage.*

floor. Those of us who started before Reorganization and the birth of the Postal Service and into the 70s and 80s realize that being a letter carrier did not require us to work under the current conditions. While it was not an easy job and there was a sort of militaristic management style there was also a kind of paternalism. Orders were expected to be followed but overtime hours during critically heavy periods were readily granted. The mail may have gotten heavy but there was no marriage mail, only 2 bundles for park and loop routes and foot routes, no DPS, Vertical Flat Cases, scanning responsibilities, and certainly no computer driven management estimates deemed sacred. Station managers and supervisors issued few disciplines.

So what happened? While it is speculative it is reasonable to look for some of the reasons behind the changes in working conditions.

#### Pay for Performance

This is the name for Postal Service bonus plan for managers. It replaced EVA or Economic Value Added, the previous bonus system, in 2003.

### There is a grueling, daily, stressful, anxiety-ridden workflow.

(*Pay-for-performance plan boosts managers' salaries* Jan Davidson *Federal Times* July 12, 2006) Management explains the system.

"About 74,000 postmasters, executives, supervisors and administrative workers participate in the new pay for performance program...the highest possible performance

(continued on page 13)

**Thornton** (continued from page 12)

raise under EVA was 6 percent. Under the new system, participants can receive a raise that range from 0 percent to 12 percent.”

The money is potentially better under this system because “...the performance pay awarded is added to regular pay, up until the recipient reaches the top-most pay level in his work category. After that the bonus pay comes in the form of a lump sum...”

*The result is to boost the amount on which an eventual*

---

**74,000 supervisors and above can receive pay raises up to 12%, based on the new bonus plan rewarding alleged performance.**

---

*pension is calculated*, Anthony Vegliante, Postal Service chief human resources officer and executive vice president said.

*It helps them get to the maximum [of their pay category] quickly, so they are in a good position for their retirement.* Steve LeNoir, National League of Postmasters President.

“The idea was to take the human part or the subjective part out of the measurement and let the numbers speak for themselves,” LeNoir said.

Headquarters Postal Management indicates, “...the performance pay plan is not significantly adding to Postal Service costs...”

“The pay for performance plan drives performance... and increases revenue and cuts costs, and that pays for itself.”

“Some managers have received no salary increases. A few have gotten the top increase of 12 percent.”

As evidence that that the new system is working... productivity increases—the agency’s own formula for what it calls *total factor productivity* that saw increases in productivity. So the pay incentive programs were instituted so that management could *get the numbers*, i.e. productivity. This in itself is not shocking; after all they’re running a business. But the *Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace* indicates that getting the numbers is not an excuse for creating a hostile work environment.

**Changes in the way work is performed**

The other part of the formula: Automation controlling costs and improving productivity cost savings through reducing work hours and the size of workforce.



Photo by Bobby Castro

*Participants heard music from Dave Welsh and Francisco Herrera of the Freedom Song Network.*



Photo by Bobby Castro

*Various media interviewed people at the vigil.*

**Incentive pay and automation—a dangerous mix? Some distant history**

Frederick Winslow Taylor came up with *The Principles of Scientific Management*. To summarize, he argued that workers in repetitive jobs worked *at the slowest rate that goes unpunished* and that the work was being performed inefficiently. He saw the goal as finding the best methods for performing various tasks, including removing unnecessary or wasted effort.

This view was somewhat mitigated by the progressive movements of the 1930s. (Ironically the purported workers paradise, the Soviet Union, adopted some of *Taylorism and Fordism* under Stalin’s Five Year Plan).

In the latter part of the 20th century Taylorism was at the root of *corporate reengineering*. *Reengineers* have been disparagingly been referred to as *bean counters*.

While automation initially and for many years had primary impact on clerks and the APWU-American Postal Workers Union, letter carriers came to see the effects in the 1990s primarily. In some sense the pigeonhole system

*(continued on page 14)*



Photo by Cherry Vargas

Manny Peralta, National Business Agent, addresses retirees at Christmas luncheon.



Photo by Cherry Vargas

Bob Murray, Chairman, retirees (right) discusses menu with Branch President Lili Beaumont (standing left).

**Thornton** (continued from page 13)

attributed to Ben Franklin was the first step in organizing carrier work in a predetermined/constant manner.

**Vertical flat cases eliminated the need to route flats.**

The automation that had the most impact on Letter Carriers was DPS Delivery Point Sequence of letter mail threatening a severe reduction in office time as well as creating added hassles in the street with multiple bundles and a concurrent increase in certain types of injuries.

**DOIS Arrives: management case.**

(Patrick Donohue Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Postmaster General *Optimizing Delivery at the US Postal Service* 5/15/2004)

The US Postal Service believed that the key to success in this delivery environment is a skilled front-line supervisory team with technology tools that provide actionable data for daily management decisions. To provide that data, the US Postal Service implemented the Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS).

*To be continued on the following topics: More on DOIS; Union response to DOIS; Automation history; Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace.*

## Approved Budget— October 1, 2006–March, 2007

	Spent Apr. '06 Sept. '06	Projected Oct. '06 Mar. '07
<b>Expense</b>		
<b>1. Salaries, FT, ,PT, Stewards, Assignment Time</b>		
President's Salary (FERS)	\$28,580.00	\$29,215.00
Executive Vice President's Salary (CSRS)	\$28,710.00	\$29,500.00
Vice President's Salary (CSRS)	\$28,710.00	\$29,500.00
Secretary-Treasurer's Salary (FERS)	\$27,695.00	\$28,450.00
Field Director Salary (FERS)	\$27,695.00	\$28,450.00
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer's Salary (CSRS)	\$13,050.00	\$13,340.00
Health Benefits Representative Salary	\$1,095.00	\$1,165.00
Sgt/Arms, MBA, EEO, S&H, Trustees, Dir of Org (8)	\$4,910.00	\$5,230.00
Shop Steward Salary	\$30,700.00	\$32,660.00
Assignment Time/Paid Time and Services (excl. Voice, Ed)	\$11,000.00	\$12,500.00
Leave Replacement	\$6,925.00	\$5,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$209,070.00</b>	<b>\$215,010.00</b>
<b>2. Officer, Steward Expenses</b>		
President's Expenses	\$1,320.00	\$1,320.00
Executive Vice President's Expenses	\$1,320.00	\$1,320.00
Vice President's Expenses	\$1,320.00	\$1,320.00
Secretary-Treasurer's Expenses	\$1,320.00	\$1,320.00
Field Director Expenses	\$1,320.00	\$1,320.00
Asst. S/T Expenses	\$660.00	\$660.00
Misc. Expenses (Other Officer & Stewards)	\$600.00	\$600.00
Leave Reimbursement	\$750.00	\$600.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,610.00</b>	<b>\$8,460.00</b>
<b>3. Taxes &amp; Officer's Benefits</b>		
Officer's Benefits	\$38,000.00	\$39,000.00
Payroll Taxes	\$22,000.00	\$21,500.00
Property Taxes	\$5,045.00	\$5,045.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65,045.00</b>	<b>\$65,545.00</b>
<b>4. Building/Office Expense</b>		
Building Maintenance & Repair	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Hall Rental/RWC Office	\$2,700.00	\$2,850.00
Loan Payment/Mortgage	\$13,650.00	\$13,650.00
Janitorial Service Office	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00
Office Utilities (Phone/Water)	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00
Printing	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Insurance (Disability//Bus. Liability/Bonding)	\$4,000.00	\$8,500.00
Insurance (Representational Liability)	\$—	\$9,000.00
Maintenance (Security/Service Contracts/ Serv-Maint)	\$5,000.00	\$6,000.00
Computer Expenses	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Office Supplies/Equipment/Office Expense	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00
Payroll Services	\$3,125.00	\$3,050.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65,675.00</b>	<b>\$80,250.00</b>
<b>5. Building Corporation</b>		
BC Elevator	\$750.00	\$750.00
BC Garbage	\$250.00	\$265.00
BC Insurance	\$3,800.00	\$3,800.00
BC Janitorial	\$1,550.00	\$1,550.00
BC Office Expense	\$50.00	\$50.00
BC Professional Fees	\$1,000.00	\$—
BC Serv Maintenance	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
BC Utilities (PG&E/Water/Elevator Phone)	\$4,000.00	\$4,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,900.00</b>	<b>\$12,415.00</b>

<b>6. Fees &amp; Dues</b>		
Professional Fees	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Affiliate Dues	\$5,000.00	\$5,225.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,500.00</b>	<b>\$7,725.00</b>
<b>7. Convention &amp; Conferences</b>		
Convention Fund	\$12,600.00	\$12,600.00
Seminars & Conferences (HBR Seminar/DC/Lobby)	\$2,000.00	\$3,800.00
Committee of President's Meeting/ National Rap Session - odd yrs	\$1,450.00	\$4,550.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,050.00</b>	<b>\$20,950.00</b>
<b>8. Education</b>		
Training, Seminars	\$23,000.00	\$23,550.00
Issue Education / Labor 2006-2007	\$2,000.00	\$5,550.00
Other: Books, Materials, NALC Supplies	\$500.00	\$500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,500.00</b>	<b>\$29,600.00</b>
<b>9. Communications</b>		
<b>Voice:</b>		
Lost Time	\$2,500.00	\$3,050.00
Expenses	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
TV 214	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,700.00</b>	<b>\$16,250.00</b>
<b>10. Entertainment</b>		
Good of the Order/Other Refreshments	\$3,290.00	\$4,000.00
Annual Dinner	\$3,500.00	\$750.00
Recreation/Picnic Steward Brunch (previously in Education Budget)	\$—	\$2,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,000.00</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,790.00</b>	<b>\$16,750.00</b>
<b>11. Representational Expenses</b>		
Representational Expenses	\$500.00	\$500.00
Contract / Picket Action / Legislative Action	\$1,200.00	\$2,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,700.00</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>
<b>12. Other</b>		
Retirement and Other Gifts	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
New Member Services / Recruitment	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Branch Elections	\$8,000.00	\$—
Food Drive	\$300.00	\$300.00
100% Union Celebration (\$4.00 per person)	\$250.00	\$250.00
Branch Items	\$—	\$4,125.00
Miscellaneous	\$500.00	\$500.00
Pending By-Law Changes in Steward Pay, Conv. Fund, etc.	\$—	\$10,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,050.00</b>	<b>\$20,175.00</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$460,110.00</b>	<b>\$495,630.00</b>

<b>Projected Income</b>			
	# of Members	Per Member	Projected Income
Active Members (13 pay periods @ 19.32)	1,955	\$251.16	\$491,020
Retired Members	358	2.25	810
Interest Income			800
Miscellaneous Income			3,000
<b>Projected Income Total</b>			<b>401,367</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME:</b>			<b>\$495,630</b>
Total Projected Expenses			<b>\$(495,630)</b>
Projected Surplus			<b>\$ —</b>

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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Photo by Cherry Vargas

*Retirees at Christmas lunch 2006 enjoying meal and conversation.*



Photo by Cherry Vargas

*Jack Morgan, Daly City retiree, looks over the plentiful food table.*

## LETTER:

December 5, 2006

Branch 214  
Ms. Lili and staff,

I just want to express my appreciation for all of the fine work you all did at our Retiree Luncheon.

It was a bit crowded but I really didn't hear any complaints. No one complained about not having enough to eat either. The food was fine and the service (all union too) was great.

Thank you all.

Respectfully,

**Bob Murray,**  
Chairman, Branch 214 Retirees

**MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 14**