



THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

March/April 2007

Award-winning newspaper

Vol. XXXVII, No.2

NALC PRESIDENT VISITS S.F. STATIONS

President Bill Young speaks to carriers at Napoleon Street and Pacific Carrier Annex

Contract discussed

By Lili Beaumont, President

March 17, 2007 will be a special day in Branch 214's history. It was on this day that on his request, Ray Fong and I accompanied our National President Bill Young in visiting the carriers at 180 Napoleon and PCA. Like encountering a celebrity, the carriers were truly surprised, but very happy to see him, and very anxious to hear him say a few words about the progress of contract negotiations.

He addressed the carriers at 180 Napoleon expressing his condolences for what had happened last year (regarding the deaths of their fellow co-workers at West Portal Station), but also said how proud he was of them for deciding to move on and not dwell on the tragedies. In his experience, he opined that it was the best thing to do. Then he spoke of the Postal Service's agenda to contract out "virgin" or new deliveries as proposed in contract negotiations.

His message to everyone at 180 Napoleon and PCA was similar in that he would do everything he could to stop the contracting out of deliveries because it would be detrimental to the Postal Service. He gave an example in Orange, California where a brand new building was contracted out because it was considered "new" deliveries, even though it was in the middle of an existing city carrier route. Nevertheless, the customer service suffered, and the Postal Service told those customers who complained that they could do nothing to that contract carrier because he was "a contracted employee".



Photo by Ray Fong

National President Bill Young greets Ed Cardenas, Station J, at Napoleon Street complex, San Francisco.

He mentioned that he would be meeting with the Postmaster General as soon as he got back to Washington DC to solicit a decision on the NALC's contract proposals, but he would not entertain any management proposals that included a clause to "contract out city carrier routes". He assured us that he would be prepared to take it to arbitration if necessary.

The only thing he requested of the carriers was to provide the best service to their customers as possible and to take the time to review the union's contract with their families, should it be negotiated, and evaluate it

(continued on page 3)

Branch 214 notes

Welcome new stewards: David Doucet (Station G), **Ken Schneider** (Novato)—Formal A's, **Roberta Bojo** (Redwood City)—Formal A's.

Welcome new alternate stewards: Jun Yap (San Rafael Main), **Harry Singh** (San Rafael Main), **Yang Yang** (San Leandro Main), **Jeff Wen** (EPC South), **David Ow**, (Sunset Finance), **Maria Soledad Cruz** (Marina) and **Scott Buckley**, (Marina).

Michael Cho of EPC, 94111, had back surgery recently and is expected to be out 6 months, according to shop steward **Vicky Sawicki**, and is requesting leave sharing donations. Contact the union office for details.

We've had a number of members who reached the 50 year membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers in 2006. Here is a belated recognition of those who received their gold card: **Leon F. Allen**, **Stephen A. Crisafi**, **Earl R. Ford**, **Ronald Tyeskey**, **Tom Wong, II**, and **Frank D. Zita**.

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
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Kathleen McConnell	Trustee
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GOLDEN GATE BRANCH
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 WEB page: <http://www.nalc214.org>
 Office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday

Carriers seeking mutual trades:

Tacoma, WA. Grade 1 regular (11/2002 seniority), seeks mutual transfer to San Francisco or surrounding areas within 40-50 miles. Please contact Jeff Richardson at (253) 227-6884 or by e-mail tahomaactivist@yahoo.com.

Emeryville, CA. PTF (12/09/06 seniority) seeks mutual transfer to San Francisco. Please contact Monica at (415) 333-4094 (H) or (415) 410-6006 (C).

Part two of **Juliette Chen's** article, "Playing Postal Roulette," because of a computer glitch, will appear in the next issue of **The Voice**.

The **cartooning talents of Juliette Chen** were more widely recognized when her cartoon "Meet the new Village People," from the Nov./Dec. 2006 **Voice** was reprinted in "The Postman," Branch 509, York, PA, February 2007.

Our Vice President **Bill Thornton's** article from the Nov./Dec. 2006 **Voice**, "We've been doing it wrong for so long that we think it's right," was reprinted in "E.A. Baker Union Update," Branch 782, Bakersfield, CA, February issue.

Kian McCarthy once again helped out as associate editor, and wrote the tribute to his late letter carrier friend elsewhere in this issue. Our thanks for his help.

Instead of hand carrying photographs and articles to our typesetters at DC Typography, we asked for and received the **electronic magic help of Cherry Vargas**, who in her spare time works as Secretary-Treasurer for Branch 214. She contributed the digital camera for some of the photos of the branch meeting. Next time she will explain how much the editor needs this help. Our humble thanks.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

New PTFs from Pacific Carrier annex at March union meeting, from left, Renier Manalo and Juan Caldera.

T.V. 214 Schedule

SAN FRANCISCO, AT&T Cable Channel 29:
Every third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
April 15, 2007, May 20, 2007
June 17, 2007

Beaumont (continued from front page)

according to their individual needs before voting to ratify it. Before and after Bill Young addressed the carriers in these complexes, he made himself available for questions and concerns.

Withholding routes

On a different matter, the branch office received correspondence from our National Business Agent, Manny Peralta, regarding management's plans to withhold residual assignments within the Pacific Area. The letter announced that the postal service's plan anticipates a reduction of about 898 full time positions as a result of the deployment of the flat sequence sorting (FSS) machines due to begin in June of 2009. The postal service has also announced their intent to fill those withheld residual vacancies with transitional employees and/or casuals until the projected savings of the flat sorting machines (automation of flats) are realized. Each branch affected has been instructed to challenge management's actions by filing a grievance protesting the actual withholding of any full-time assignment when the union is placed on notice that an assignment is actually withheld; and to file a grievance to protest the actual hiring of a transitional employee and/or casual employee based on the above. The list has come out and only the city of San Francisco

showed up on management's list for our branch. They plan to withhold 70 full-time assignments with the FSS machine impact date of 7/10/2010.

Protecting your routes

A series of 2006 **Voice** issues included articles written specifically to offer guidance and tools on how letter carriers can protect their routes' office and street times. Our national magazine, the *Postal Record*, also offered a series of articles on route protection. The information circulated in these two publications advise carriers to "protect" their routes, but the term "protect" doesn't mean to "slow down deliberately". "Protecting your route" means that you should do your route by the contract and according to the M-41 (this manual should be in all the black route books at all carrier cases) and the flowchart. It means that you should do your route safely, professionally, and consistently every day. Doing this is more crucial than ever because implementation of the FSS machines means loss of more caseable mail volume which inevitably means loss of more carrier routes in the near future. Those carriers who are inconsistent with their route times and/or do not perform their duties by the book will become the most vulnerable to the impact of the FSS machines. But ultimately, all of us will be affected. That is why it important that everyone stand together to protect each other and protect their routes.



President Bill Young, Director of Organization and Shop Steward, West Portal, Kim Truong, and Branch 214 President Lili Beaumont at 180 Napoleon Street, San Francisco, March 17, 2007.

Photo by Ray Fong

When machines take over

Pay incentives and automation—the road to abuse?

By Bill Thornton, Vice-President

(This is part 2 of an article on changing conditions for carriers.)

Management case for DOIS

Between June and December of 1999, DOIS was deployed on a pilot basis to 345 sites in six USPS districts. The results achieved from pilot deployment of DOIS were favorable. (The comments on DOIS are taken from "Optimizing Delivery at the U.S. Postal Service," by Patrick Donohue, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Postmaster General, 5/15/2004.) Some of management's stated arguments for this system are:



- DOIS supported the delivery of mail consistently to households and businesses, through equitable allocation of resources to cover the daily workloads.
- DOIS reduced operating costs through improved scheduling and deployment of letter carriers, based on daily workload and correctly established route structures.

- DOIS enabled more effective route inspections and route adjustments by introducing a comprehensive mechanism to collate inspection and adjustment data; and

- DOIS improved productivity through a balanced distribution of workload across delivery units and routes.

On Aug. 29, 2000, following the success of the DOIS pilot deployment; national deployment of DOIS was approved. DOIS national deployment, completed in four phases to the remaining 80 USPS districts, ended in September 2002. At the end of the national deployment, more than 6,700 delivery units were actively using DOIS and more than 20,000 people had been trained.

The decision to proceed with DOIS national deployment in August 2000 was based on an economic decision analysis report (DAR). The calculated benefits in the DAR were based on the DOIS pilot results. The DAR estimated the annual productivity of DOIS sites would be 1.5 percent better than non-DOIS sites and that the annual productivity savings would be \$91.9 million.

The business performance page of the fiscal year 2002 accounting period 1 "Performance Measurement Report"

showed that for fiscal year 2001 accounting periods 12 and 13, the DOIS sites nationwide experienced a 1.5 percent better productivity rate than the non-DOIS sites. This is the same level of productivity increase resulting from DOIS reported in the DAR. However, today this 1.5 percent translates to a \$193.9 million annual productivity savings versus the \$91.9 million in the DAR.

Devil in the details—union response to DOIS

One of the problems with this was articulated in the Postal Record of March 2006 in an article by Fred Rolando, Director of City Delivery: *One of the major problems in the field results from supervisors who have allowed DOIS to replace their ability and/or responsibility to make decisions and instead rely solely on the projected times generated by DOIS . . . issues . . . have to do with the accuracy of the daily volumes...integrity of base data . . . calculations, the use of percent to standard and fixed office time, are derived from and can only be changed pursuant to a full count and inspection. . .*

The national union has acknowledged, if only indirectly, that DOIS is not going away. *As President Young has pointed out, the Postal Service needs a DOIS system—a DOIS system that is accurate and that could help modernize and improve delivery management. (What's the Deal with DOIS? May 2006 Postal Record)*

What's the union going to do about it?

Meanwhile, at every level of the union, the advice for carriers is that the work rules have not changed. Section 131 M-41, relating to carrier assessment of workload, has not changed and the basic requirement of an honest day's work for an honest day's pay remains. The M-41 makes no mention of DOIS and carriers have the right and responsibility to request time /assistance based on their estimate and experience.

This protection is not the quick fix carriers would love to hear from the union. Carriers cannot be disciplined for

The rules have not changed ... 131.4 M-41

failure to meet DOIS standards but management goes around that by other spurious disciplines including *Unauthorized Overtime, Delay of Mail, Expanding Street and Office Times, etc.* Carriers can protect themselves against almost all of these charges by following the requirements of, once again, 131.4 of the M-41. Management issues instructions and carriers follow those instructions. Unfortunately, carriers are regularly abused on the phone when they follow 131.4 M-41 and call from the street for instructions.

Carriers should insist on this even if there is a stubborn refusal of the carrier supervisor to budge from the com-

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Thornton (continued from page 4)

puter-generated estimate. Too many times carriers get tired of the daily hassle over 3996s not responded to, not responded to reasonably, or not made available. It may

Carrier workload is estimated on Form 3996 by carrier . . .

often seem a waste of time, but management refusal to follow the manuals in these regards is serious contractual violations and grievances should be filed.

DOIS and Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace.

But at the same time, the system of DOIS as the primary tool of carrier management, and the financial incentive for managers at various levels to sacrifice people's dignity to get the numbers, is abhorrent and contradicts the *Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace*.

Violent events of the 1980s and early 90s led to a 1992 *Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace* (an anti-violence policy) and a subsequent reiteration of that policy. The 1996 Snow Arbitration established the Joint Statement as a part of the Contract and enforceable.

The Snow decision said that if management can use the anti-violence policy to discipline violent workers, then the contract principle of mutuality of remedies provides that workers have the same right. Prior to the Snow

Managers get bonuses for increasing productivity—or numbers, but . . .

decision, only non-supervisory workers faced public discipline for violent behavior. If supervisory workers were disciplined, and union workers were skeptical that they were, discipline was private and workers never knew what, if any, measures management meted out to heavy-handed supervisors. That policy created resentment and suspicion among union workers.

Under the anti-violence policy, workers who feel that they have been inhumanely treated have the right to use the grievance procedure to bring bullying or abusive supervisors to a neutral forum for a resolution.

However, the reality is that policies designed to restrain negative behavior are typically aimed at non-supervisory employees. "Violence prevention" has singled out craft employees, many times unfairly, while ignoring daily psychological violence perpetrated by supervisors and their enabling managers who refuse to apply policies to themselves.

A culture persists in the Postal Service that allows management a pass on many kinds of improper behavior.

Because much behavior has come to be accepted by management does not make it right.

Arbitrator Bernice L. Fields in 2000 Arbitration Decision wrote:

Some important points brought out in the Arbitration: Supervisors can be disciplined for violations of the Joint Statement, acknowledgement of psychological violence by supervisors and the power imbalance between management and employee, employer liability.

Because the relationship between supervisor and employee is inherently unequal, an employee confronted by a supervisor with behavior that a reasonable person

The Joint Statement on Violence says making the numbers is not an excuse for a hostile work environment.

would find offensive, such as yelling, name-calling, profane, sarcastic, belittling, or other inappropriate language is a victim of workplace intimidation and constitutes threats to an employee, even if no direct threatening language is used.

The threat is implied in the nature of the relationship. A supervisor can do things to the employee from writing a negative evaluation to termination. Therefore the supervisor will be held to a higher standard of review in supervisor-employee confrontations. The offense is aggravated if it occurs in front of co-workers or third persons such as postal customers. Angry shouting, abusive, profane or other inappropriate language demeans and humiliates an employee, and has no place on the workroom floor. . . .

When such behavior is the *supervisor's everyday management style* on the workroom floor, there is a *presumption that a hostile work environment exists*, and more stringent remedies may be taken to correct the situation.

Despite these high sounding principles, difficulties in removing abusive supervisors are many and include, in addition to *numbers motivated* upper management

That improper behavior by management has come to be accepted does not make it right.

implicit support of such behavior, the fact that the individual supervisors have themselves due process protections and the difficulty of proving the violations in the Grievance or EEO procedures. Sometimes managers are only removed if there is a *smoking gun* and even then after all their appeals are exhausted they are allowed to remain in the Postal Service as a PTF.

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Thornton (continued from page 5)

Coming to terms with the reality of automation

The union cannot stop the automation or the volume recording systems like DOIS and cannot keep managers off the workroom floor but can fight abuses. (The national union has spoken longingly for the prospect of the elimination of 60,000 supervisors with some form of self-management.)

American Labor long ago gave up any participation in the running of companies in exchange for some other guarantees. Typical of most unions, the NALC can deal with *Wages and Working Conditions*. This means that the automation that has entered the letter carrier life was done with limited oversight by the union. There have been *Joint Statements* on this and that but the automation came and

The supervisor is held to a higher standard by Arbitrator Fields.

continues. Issues have been raised and resolved by the union at the national and local levels. Various agreements have been reached: work methods, number of bundles, route adjustments, etc. Unresolved issues remain in the grievance procedure. But the automation is in place.

Much of the abuse continues to be about how much work can be done in how much time. The manuals have not changed in these regards. 131.4 of the M-41 still guarantee carriers the right to estimate their workload. Carriers estimate their time and management has to respond. Curtailment is only by management and Form 1571 should be utilized. A management order to finish is authorization for the carrier to take the necessary overtime.

As the arbitration(s) have indicated, the relationship between the employee and management is unequal and therefore certain kinds of behavior by management is inappropriate, as indicated above. This could include abuse when requesting overtime/assistance including calling in from the street, comments about work performance on the work room floor, remarks that belittle, ridicule or make fun of carrier, improper remarks when a carrier suffers an injury, etc.

To push the envelope a bit because of the current environment, anytime you are made to feel uncomfortable you should ask yourself whether this is because management did something improper. If so a grievance should be considered.

Carriers need to stand together and respond to work place abuse. Just a few carriers responding to abuse in the grievance procedure gives management a free ride and allows them to continue the abuse. Unless grievances and if necessary EEOs are filed there will be no end to

the chronic abuse. While carriers are often frustrated with the grievance procedure, it is the system for resolving disputes. Within it, there is a steward system in place that needs to be utilized.

If a steward is unavailable or if management refuses to allow time to talk to steward, the union office should be notified. If necessary, the union will assign a steward.

Our primary protections lie in the insistence that the contract be followed, including the Postal Service Manual M-41 Section 131.4 regarding carrier rights concerning estimation of work loads and the requirement for management to treat employees with dignity and respect contained in 115.4 of the M-39 and the *Joint Statements on Violence and Behavior* . . .

This means utilizing the shop steward. And above all it means that an injury to one is an injury to all and we ignore that at our peril. It's a daily commitment for all of us. Every union response is not a home run but not to participate in the process and utilize the tools we have is to concede defeat. The Grievance Procedure is the mechanism for resolving disputes between employees and management. But dignity and respect in the age of automation and numbers driven management is not strictly a function of the grievance procedure, although that remains the process that ties things together. Strong steward presence in a station and solidarity help to create a force that becomes a continuing protection against management abuse.

Automation History Postal Service/Milestones

1959 awarded its first volume order for mechanization to Pitney-Bowes, Inc., for the production of 75 Mark II facer-cancellers. In 1984, more than 1,000 Mark II and M-36 facer-cancellers were in operation. By 1992, these machines were outdated and began to be replaced by advanced facer-canceller systems (AFCS) purchased from ElectroCom L.P. The AFCSs process more than 30,000 pieces of mail per hour, twice as fast as the M-36 facer-cancellers. AFCSs are more sophisticated too: they electronically identify and separate pre-barcoded mail, handwritten letters, and machine-imprinted pieces for faster processing through automation.

The Department's accelerated mechanization program began in the late 1960s and consisted of semi-automatic

Automation is in place.

equipment such as the MPLSM, the single position letter sorting machine (SPLSM), and the facer-canceller. In November 1965, the Department put a high-speed optical character reader (OCR) into service in the Detroit Post Office. This first-generation machine was connected to an MPLSM frame and read the city/state/ZIP Code line of

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The future of democracy

Vote-by-Mail (VBM)

By Carol Ann Maggio, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Our current voting system in this country leaves a lot to be desired. Each state has its own way of doing things. Each county within each state owns different voting equipment. Let's remember the hanging chads in Florida. What is needed? A better method of voting! Everyone in this country grows up waiting to cast their first ballot.



What better way to have a secure voting system than to Vote-by-Mail. The NALC is strongly supporting Vote-by-Mail as the best alternative to our current system.

Every time an election occurs you hear of equipment breakdown, human error and poll workers with little to no training. The citizens of the United States trust the United States Postal

Service, and currently in many counties in California more than 50% of the voters Vote-by-Mail.

Here are some reasons why the Vote-by-Mail system is supported by the NALC:

There is a remarkable increase in voter turnout

In Oregon, a Vote-by-Mail system increased voter turnout and more than 90% of voters in Oregon vote in each election. In Washington State all but one county now has Vote-by-Mail. Within a short period of time, all of Wash-

The NALC strongly supports Vote-by-Mail.

ington State will have Vote-by-Mail. Voters listed their reasons as it is more convenient to Vote-by-Mail, they do not have to stand in long lines at the polls, they do not have to take time off work to vote, and that they had the privacy of their own homes to make their voting choices.

Increase in revenue to the USPS

The dangerous decrease in mail volume has had a long lasting effect on the USPS. This is job security, as an increase in mail volume in the form of ballots would help offset lost income to the USPS. Our jobs are dependent upon the viability of the USPS as a public institution.

Federal workers are protectors of the ballot

The citizens of the US trust their letter carriers and as federal workers we would protect the integrity of the American voting process. USPS employees would be responsible for delivering and processing the ballots.

Advanced technology to counter voter fraud

There is no evidence that counties that have well administered elections with large numbers of absentee voters are prone to fraud. In Oregon, the Vote-by-Mail

Vote-by-Mail would increase revenue to the USPS.

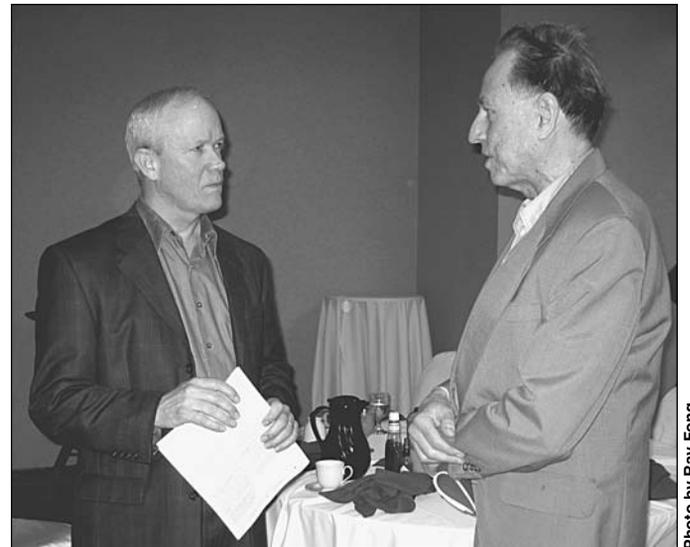
system allows the ballots to be signature verified and has the ability to have re-counted paper ballots. This has made Oregon's elections very secure.

In the 110th Congress, Representative Susan Davis (D-CA) introduced HR 281, the Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act of 2007. The measure would amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to prohibit a state from imposing additional conditions or requirements on the eligibility of an individual to cast a vote in federal elections by mail, except to the extent that it imposes a deadline for requesting the ballot and returning it to the appropriate state or local election official. The NALC is encouraging

Advanced technology would negate voter fraud.

Members of Congress to support Vote-by-Mail initiatives and to cosponsor HR 281. Please write to your Congressional Representative to support and cosponsor Vote-by-Mail, HR 281 for our future.

California State Association of Letter Carriers (CSALC) President John Beaumont is currently working with Jared Huffman, California Assemblyman from the North Bay on an Assembly bill here in California for Vote-by-Mail.



Democratic Congressman Jerry McNerney, newly elected from the 11th District, talking with former Branch 214 Executive Vice-President Dave Welsh, right, at the Congressional Breakfast, San Mateo, March 18, 2007.

Photo by Ray Fong

PCA



Photo by Ray Fong

Pacific Carrier Annex, San Francisco carriers with National President Bill Young, center standing, at a visit to their complex on March 17, 2007.

Branch 214 Meetings

Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

April 4, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
May 2, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
June 6, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Steward meetings, 6:00 P.M.

April 4, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
May 2, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
June 6, 2007	ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Retiree social meeting, 12:30 P.M.

April 2, 2007	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
June 4, 2007	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
August 6, 2007	740 Del Monte Ave., South SF

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Leahy, Claudia (Novato)
 Gonzalez, Luis J. (Daly City)
 Javaheri, Joshua Abraham (Daly City)
 Eng, Dennis W. (San Rafael)
 Aoay, Alfredo E. (PCA)
 Basurto, Alfredo G. (Collections)

IN MEMORIAM

Magdaleno, Ronald D. (Sausalito)

Napoleon Street



Photo by Ray Fong

Bill Young, National President NALC, standing center, poses with carriers at Napoleon Street complex, San Francisco on March 17, 2007.



Photo by Ray Fong

Steward Regina Gillespie, Station J, right, asks question during visit of National President Bill Young at 180 Napoleon Street complex.



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In memory of Brother Magdaleno

By Kian McCarthy, Sausalito Shop Steward

Sausalito station lost one of its own on January 29th. Ronald Magdaleno died following a 2½ month battle with cancer. The number of people who attended Mr. Magdaleno's memorial service on February 24th was and is a testament of the love and respect that his fellow carriers, associates and friends had for him.

Ron was born in August of 1940. He was raised in east Los Angeles, CA within a large family of predominant Mexican and Navaho Indian ancestry. In his youth, he listened to the music of John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and other notable jazz artists. His devotion to and fondness of the jazz art never waned.

Brother Ron originally began his postal-government service career circa 1958-'59. He worked in several different stations within the City of Angels, Branch 24.

He conveyed how he even had a carrier route in the Watts district back when the post office was still known as the U.S. Post Office Department and letter carriers used brown leather satchels to pack their mail.

He remembered in conversation once the horror and violence of the Watts Riot of 1965.

From L.A. to Bay Area

Following a break in service, and a move from the southland north to the San Francisco Bay Area, brother Ron resumed his career in 1973 at the Sausalito Post Office in Marin County.

Apparently in those days, Sausalito station was not a part of local Branch 214, but a local union standing alone. Brother Ron thought this to be a peculiar circumstance, that is, Sausalito station being a union of and to itself.

Within a short period, Brother Ron observed certain injustices being expedited toward his fellow carriers. He also realized that the so-called union system within Sausalito station was one that was not fair, equal, or one committed to the solidarity of those concerned.

Merger with Branch 214

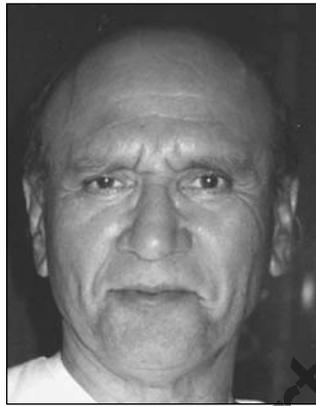
Brother Ron mentioned to this writer how he and fellow carrier Thomas Harris became so frustrated by the working conditions and the "system" within Sausalito station in 1984-1985 that "they" (Magdaleno and Harris) got on the telephone with Branch 214's own full-time officer Dave Welsh and complained of the situation. According to Brother Ron, Brother Welsh personally

made a trip over to Sausalito station where a formal vote was conducted amongst the carriers on whether to join and become a part of San Francisco Local Branch 214. Other Sausalito carriers affirmatively joined Brother's Magdaleno and Harris in their feelings of frustration, and voted to disband the single station union system and merge with San Francisco Branch 214. Following the merger, Brother Ron became a shop steward. He remained a steward until 1997.

I remember how helpful and supportive Brother Ron was to this writer-carrier when I began my career in late 1986.

There were still foot routes when I first began carrying mail, and I remember how Brother Ron jokingly criticized this writer with constructive criticism about the amount of mail I packed into the satchel, with the satchel practically dragging on the ground behind me.

Brother Ron's case was two cases away from mine. I could generally tell when he was in good spirits and on those few occasions when he was in less than a happy frame.



Ronald Magdaleno

Love of music

We both had and have a love of the music of the late and great Johnny Cash. Brother Ron particularly enjoyed Cash's 1964-produced work, "The Ballads of The American Indian."

We shared and supported each other as friends and co-workers. When Brother Ron went through a "split" in a relationship situation, he stayed at my home on one occasion. He defended me during various just-cause discipline cases in front of management. He always encouraged me to attend the monthly union branch meetings, and I have done so.

We went out for coffee and dinner together many times.

He always reminded me to put in "a 96," to not be "buffaloed" into underestimating my time estimate on the 3996, and to always be "true to myself."

When management was in the wrong, he told them so. If brother Ron was not right, he stubbornly admitted his shortcoming.

Brother Ron's last day on the route was approximately the first Friday in November. We communicated by telephone the week before Christmas.

When I saw him in the hospital, I told him that if there were ever an occasion when I had uttered an unkind word, I was sorry. He in turn said the same.

A Catholic priest gave Brother Ron full absolution on January 15th.

I visited with him for the last time on January 16th. We embraced each other. The last thing he said to me was: "I love you man."

Thornton (continued from page 6)

typed addresses to sort letters to one of the 277 pockets. Each subsequent handling of the letter required that the address be read again.

1970: Postal Hearings; wildcat strike; 1970 Postal Reorganization Act -Four basic provisions: Adequate financial authority, Removal of System from Politics, Continuity of management, Collective bargaining between management and unions.

1971: Postal Service created, to eventually stand on its own without federal subsidies. Ended in 1983.

1978: To reduce the number of mail piece handlings, the Postal Service began to develop an expanded ZIP Code.

1982: Computer-driven single-line optical character reader. The equipment required a letter to be read only once at the originating office by an OCR, which printed a barcode on the envelope. At the destination office, a less expensive barcode sorter (BCS) sorted the mail by reading its barcode.

**All that is ultimately required
is an honest day's work for an
honest day's pay. . .**

1983: ZIP+4 and incentives for First-Class Mail bearing the ZIP+4 code.

1984: First delivery phase of the new OCR channel sorters and BCSs. 252 OCRs were installed in 118 major mail processing centers across the country and were processing 24,000 pieces of mail per hour (an average productivity rate of 6,200 pieces per work hour)—a substantial increase compared to the 1,750 pieces per work hour processed by MPLSMs.

1991: Delivery point barcode, with an 11-digit ZIP Code, mail arriving in trays at the delivery post office sorted in "walk sequence." The MLOCR reads the barcode and address, and then constructs a unique 11-digit delivery point barcode using the Postal Service's National Directory and the last two digits of the street address. Then barcode sorters put the mail in sequence for delivery. Multilane optical character readers (MLOCRs) read the entire address on an envelope, spray a barcode on the envelope, and then sort it at the rate of more than nine per second. Wide area barcode readers can read a barcode virtually anywhere on a letter. Advanced facer-canceller systems face, cancel, and sort mail. The remote bar-coding system (RBCS) provides bar coding for handwritten script mail or mail that cannot be read by OCRs.

The RBCS now allows most of this mail to receive delivery point barcodes without being removed from the

(continued on page 14)



Photo and caption courtesy U.S. Postal Service

"If I had not been wearing my seatbelt and shoulder harness, I might not be here today. It happened so fast and all I could do was hope I would survive. I am grateful I did everything with safety in mind."

On a day in late February, 2007 a North Bay carrier, a long time postal employee, was driving on his route in a rural part of Marin County when a errant driver crossed the yellow line and hit his LLV head on. The accident would have been much worse if it wasn't for the defensive driving done by the carrier, he turned away from the oncoming car right before it struck the front left side of the LLV, then it flipped over on to the drivers side. He did everything right. There was no fault on his part, he had the door closed and his seatbelt on. He was very lucky he walked away from the accident shaken, battered and bruised. It was hard to imagine after seeing the damage to the LLV.

**It's not just the law,
it's your life.**

Had he not been wearing his seatbelt he would not be with us today. It's not just the law, it's your life! Failure to wear a seatbelt contributes to more fatalities than any other single safety related traffic behavior, 63% of people killed in accidents are not wearing seatbelts. If 90% of Americans buckled up we could prevent more than 5,500 deaths and 132,000 injuries annually.

The cost of unbuckled drivers and passengers goes far beyond those killed and the loss to their families. We all pay for those who don't buckle-up in higher taxes, higher health care costs and higher insurance. On an average every American pays about \$580 a year toward the cost of crashes. The latest statistics on auto accidents annually are 6,420,000 in the United States the financial cost 230 billion dollars, 2.9 million people injured and 42,636 people killed. About 115 people die every day in auto accidents 1 death every 13 minutes so "Click It Or Ticket." Seat Belts Save Lives!

*Karen Schuler
Safety and Health Officer*

March 7, 2007

Report on the situation at PCA

By Audrey Davis, Carrier, Pacific Carrier Annex

During the February 2, 2007 meeting at Dan Bernal's office Winifred Groux, San Francisco District Manager for the U. S. Postal Service stated the problem at the Pacific Carrier Annex (PCA) as "a turnover in supervisors that failed to keep up the goals of the Peace Team." The Peace Team was a group of union and management people that worked with personnel at PCA for about two years to correct the problems with communication, trust and dignity and respect.

The craft employees present at that meeting disagreed with District Manager Groux's characterization of the problems at our worksite and stated that the conditions did not improve after the Peace Team intervention, they got worse and it would be a mistake to blame the three new supervisors for the five or six years of abuse. The station manager is a full participant to the treatment of employees at that facility. Upper management is aware of the conditions, at least through recommendations of the Peace Team (to remove Station Manager Denton), the Voice of the Employee surveys, and an investigation conducted by manager Steve Santos in August of 2006.

District Manager Groux stated that after she found out about the letter "petition" signed by 87 PCA employees which was sent to our congresswoman, currently Speaker



District Mgr. Groux took part in a meeting to resolve problems.

of the House Nancy Pelosi, she initiated a "Postal Inspection Service intervention." That was not an intervention in the dictionary sense but was basically an investigation of the work environment.

District Manager Groux stated at that meeting on 2/2/07 that she would address the employees at PCA because, "they need to hear that we agree that the treatment of employees there has not been appropriate."

That did not happen. Instead, Station Manager Denton, who is responsible for condoning the inappropriate behavior, as well as participating in the actual harassment and abusive treatment of employees, was put in charge of "debriefing" PCA letter carriers.

The following is a summary of what Station Manager Denton said to us:

This meeting is about the petition sent to Nancy Pelosi's office about harassment. There was a meeting two weeks ago at Nancy Pelosi's office with the district manager, the postmaster and the union all there. It was determined that PCA has a problem with a lack of communication and dignity and respect.

There are going to be different classes to educate the supervisors and manager about changing the way we do things. Station Manager Denton said in a very stern

The atmosphere at PCA is worse than ever.

voice, "the yelling on the work room floor has to stop." She paused and looked very hard and serious at each craft employee in the room and then said, "The harassment, as it's called, has to stop . . . on both sides."

Carriers are not doing their jobs the proper way and when the supervisors try to correct them the carriers are saying things like, "I know my job, I've been here for twenty years," and then the supervisors are not reacting properly. This has to stop!

Not an announcement

This was not an acknowledgement that employees have been mistreated, as promised by District Manager Groux, it was just one more opportunity for the station manager to accuse letter carriers of not doing their jobs.

Furthermore, Ms. Denton's statement is a gross mischaracterization of the problems at PCA! The truth is that management's incentive pay (bonuses) depends on increasing productivity (and other goals) and the local management is using harassment and intimidation to do it. The place is run like a sweatshop! Communication; forget it! Trust; long gone! Dignity and respect; doesn't exist!

The Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace states;

We all grieve for the Royal Oak victims, and we sympathize with their families, as we have grieved and sympathized all too often before in similar horrifying circumstances. But grief and sympathy are not enough.

The place is run like a sweatshop.

Neither are ritualistic expressions of grave concern or the initiation of investigations, studies, or research projects. (my emphasis)

It goes on to say:

We openly acknowledge that in some places or units there is an unacceptable level of stress in the workplace;

(continued on page 13)

Davis (continued from page 12)

that there is no excuse for and will be no tolerance of violence or any threats of violence by anyone at any level of the Postal Service; and that there is **no excuse for and will be no tolerance of harassment, intimidation, threats, or bullying by anyone.** (my emphasis)

We also affirm that every employee at every level of the Postal Service should be treated at all times with dignity, respect and fairness. The need for the USPS to serve the public efficiently and productively, and the need for all employees to be committed to giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, does not justify actions that are abusive

Management actions are in direct contrast to the Joint Statement on Violence.

or intolerant. **"Making the numbers" is not an excuse for the abuse of anyone.** Those whose unacceptable behavior continues will be removed from their positions. (my emphasis)

The Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace addresses exactly what is going on at PCA and at other stations in San Francisco.

- Ritualistic expressions of grave concern
- The initiation of investigations
- Harassment, intimidation, threats, and bullying
- "Making the numbers" **is** their excuse for abusing employees at PCA

The atmosphere at PCA is worse than ever. Threats, intimidation, bullying and harassment are routine. There is no real communication, just orders and instructions. Station Manager Denton continues her practice of micro-managing with an emphasis on control. We are treated like we are a bunch of two year olds out on parole and it is very frustrating, to say the least.



Photo by Ray Fong

NALC President Bill Young, left, explains a contractual point to shop steward, Sunset, Steve McCaffree.

Letter to Congress

October 13, 2006

Dear Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi,

Employees working at the Pacific Carrier Annex are requesting your assistance. We are working with an unacceptable level of stress. We realize that the management here has to meet certain goals set by their superiors, but there is no excuse for the constant harassment and intimidation that is taking place. Our rights are being trampled on and our opinions seem to be meaningless.

Management is placing the employees into a no win situation where we get "in trouble," no matter what we do and meanwhile they cover up their own daily violations and inabilities. In the past we have worked together to give the best possible service to our customers, but that is no longer the case. Customer service is suffering and that hurts all of us.

We have tried everything we can think of to improve the situation, from the grievance procedure to a "Peace Team" intervention and things have only gotten worse. A few months ago the San Francisco Postmaster sent out a team to investigate our very low "Voice of the Employee" survey scores, but nothing was done to change the hostile environment here at PCA.

Please assist us in any way that you can, your help would be greatly appreciated. We know our customers would appreciate it too.

Sincerest Thanks,

PCA Employees
1199 Otega Street
San Francisco, CA 94122

This letter was signed by approximately 90 employees at the Pacific Carrier Annex and sent to: Nancy Pelosi (Congresswoman); Noemi Luna (SF Postmaster); John Potter (Postmaster General); Bill Young (National President of the NALC); Lili Buencamino-Beaumont (President of NALC Branch 214)



Photo by Ray Fong

President Bill Young details the latest points on the contract negotiations deadlock.

Don't throw it away

When the union writes to you

By Lynda Beigel, Branch 214

1. Why did I get that letter from the union office?

Choose the correct answer or answers from the following:

- I filed a grievance about discipline and the union wants me to know the result.
- I filed a grievance about being cheated and the union wants me to know the result.
- The steward filed a class action grievance and I am getting a promotion or some money as a result.
- So I can let the union office and my steward know if I don't get the money due me in a grievance resolution within several pay periods.
- So I have a record of the grievance number for my records in case there is a problem implementing the agreed upon resolution.
- The union also wants me to know what part of the contract and postal manual or federal law management was violated.

The correct answer to this is, all of the above.

The union informs its members by letter about grievance results.

2. Then we get to the question of why I didn't get a letter from the union office? Maybe others around me did get letters and I'm wondering why I didn't. Choose the correct answer or answers from the following:

- I saw my steward but no grievance was filed.
- My steward never completed paperwork and never sent it to the union office.
- Lynda screwed up and forgot to send a letter.
- When the grievance was resolved, the steward or Formal A representative gave me a copy of the resolution in person.

Answer to number 2 is also, all of the above.

(Ed. note: Lynda Beigel volunteers in the union office several days a week taking care of grievance result notification, among many other things.)

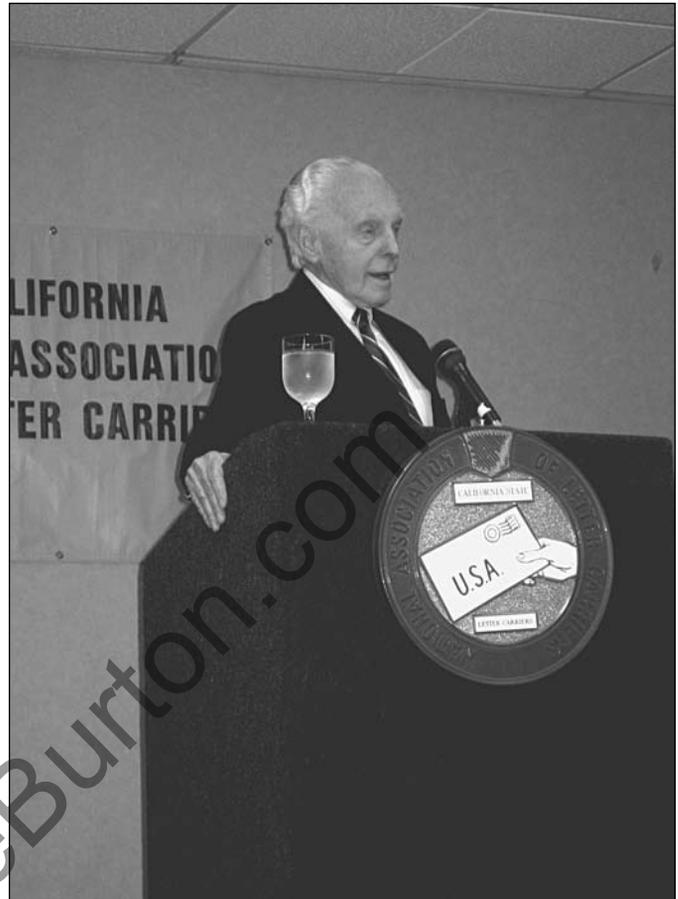


Photo by Ray Fong

Long time Democratic Congressman Tom Lantos, 12th district, regales participants at Congressional Breakfast, March 18, 2007.

Thornton (continued from page 11)

automated mail stream. When MLOCRs cannot read an address, they spray an identifying code on the back of the envelope. Operators at a data entry site, which may be far from the mail processing facility, read the address on a video screen and key a code that allows a computer to determine the ZIP Code information. The results are transmitted back to a modified barcode sorter, which pulls the 11-digit ZIP Code information for that item, and sprays the correct barcode on the front of the envelope. The mail then can be sorted within the automated mail stream.

Postal Reform 2006: While the Postal Service was excused from an enormous dollar amount of liabilities and the survival of the Postal Service was reinforced, postal rate increases for stamps were not to be allowed to rise higher than the Consumer Price Index.

Please cough

How much do you want to save on prescriptions?

By Franklin H. Woo, NALC HBR



If you haven't yet, take out the blue pamphlet entitled "NALC Health Benefit Plan"—"You Asked For It, The Plan Delivered! 2007." You know, the one that came along with your official 2007 NALC Health Benefit Plan brochure. Now, take a few minutes and look over the section on Prescriptions beginning on page 8. This will give you some great information on the Prescription program for 2007. I was very pleased to have learned about the Preferred NALC Retail Pharmacies on page 9. The listed pharmacies have stepped up to offer the NALC Health Benefit Plan members an additional discount! This may mean that our members will see lower priced brand name drugs at these pharmacies. Pages 10 & 11, show just a partial list of pharmacies in the NALC CareSelect Network. The ones with a * next to it indicate of being a Preferred NALC Retail Pharmacy. To see if your pharmacy is in the Network, or to locate a NALC CareSelect Network pharmacy, call 1-800-933-NALC, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

But wait—save even more

Okay, how much do you want to save on prescriptions? Being a member of the NALC HBP gives you the freedom of selecting your doctors, hospitals and other medical providers, right? Right, unless it was an emergency

The blue pamphlet gives you explanations.

situation when you didn't have the freedom of selecting one. With purchasing prescriptions, you also have the freedom of deciding where to go to make your purchase. Where you go does make a difference on how much the prescription will cost you and may make you do some paper work in the process. Read on! I will give you some examples using myself to illustrate a point or two.

My own example

I am an enrollee without Medicare coverage. I got a bad cough and visited my PPO doctor (office visit for \$20). He wrote me a prescription for some cough medicine, with 2 refills. I go to a NALC CareSelect pharmacy

and make my purchase there. I know that I can only buy up to a 30 day supply of the cough medicine and that it will cost me 25% of the cost and with no paperwork on my part (Medicare: 15% of cost)! Okay, after the first thirty days, the nasty cough was still with me. I went back to the same pharmacy and requested a second fill on the cough medicine and again paid 25% of the cost.

Still coughing

Doggone it, that thirty days went by and I was still coughing. I looked on the label on the cough medicine bottle and it said that I had one refill left. Could I go back to the same network pharmacy and fill it for the 3rd time? Yes, but it will cost me! Just like going to a non-network pharmacy, I must pay the full cost of the prescription and I must file a claim for reimbursement. In this case, I am responsible for a \$25 deductible and 50% of the Plan's allowance (Medicare: 50% of Plan's allowance only).

Other choices: mail order

Are there any other choices for saving money? Yes! I would go back to my doctor and discuss the situation with him or her. If I do need more of the same medication, I would let the doctor know that I will be using the Mail Order program for my prescription: **60 day supply**—\$8.00 copay for generic (Medicare: \$7.00);

Long term needed medication can be bought by mail.

\$24.00 copay for brand name (Medicare: \$20.00); **90 day supply**—\$12.00 copay for generic (Medicare: \$10.00); \$35.00 copay for brand name (Medicare: \$30.00). So, I can ask my doctor to write me a prescription for up to a 90 day supply plus refills. Just complete a Mail Service Order Form and put it in the mail, and you need to give it some time—since you are sending in a new prescription and not requesting for a refill by telephone (much faster for refills).

Immediate needs

If the doctor is giving me a new prescription for the Mail Order program and I would need to start the medication immediately, I would ask him for another prescription for the same medication, but for a shorter supply—so I can fill it at a network pharmacy and should have enough of the medication until my mail order gets to me. Make sense? Now, explain it back to me!

Should you need any supplies or answers to questions, feel free to leave me a voice message at the union office (415-362-0214 or 800-4BR-0214). Or, you can contact the NALC Health Benefit Plan home office directly, beginning 5:00 A.M. (our time) at 1-888-636-6252 (8:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. EST) and ask to speak with a CSR (Customer Service Representative). Be sure to have your Member I.D. number ready.

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



Address service requested

A Non-Profit Organization
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THE YOUNGER GENERATION



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

G.G. Chang, Station F steward, at the branch meeting with his son Joshua.



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

Mitch Anduja, Diamond Heights Steward, with daughter Megan, at March 2007 meeting.



Photo by Ray Fong

Katie Truong with father Kim Truong, Director of Organization, at Congressional Breakfast, San Mateo, March 18, 2007.

Photos of NALC President Young's visit on pages 3, 8, 9 and 13.

ALSO INSIDE:

- **DOIS Effect**-page **4**
- **Vote by mail**-page **7**
- **PCA disarray** -pages **12,13**
- **Prescription medicine** -page **15**