



# THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

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Award-winning newspaper

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## Caser/Streeter Pilot Program Crash Lands at the Marina Station

By Charles Gonzalez, Field Director

By now some of you may have heard of the Caser/Streeter Pilot Program. If you haven't heard, it is a test project that was unilaterally implemented in two phases, first on the Peninsula and now in the city. Because it is a "pilot program" it can be implemented without any negotiations with the union.

San Francisco's Marina Station, which serves the Marina and Presidio areas on the northern waterfront of the city, was chosen to be part of phase two of the program. It was implemented on February 28, 2012, marriage mail day. There were 25 routes in the station, of which two were eliminated.



### Two types of carriers

As the name implies, the assignments at the station were divided into "Caser" and "Streeter" duties, and the assignment start time varied from 6:00 am to 9:00 am. Previously the starting time was 7:30 am, with a 15 minute flextime window. The Casers, whose assignments are to case and pull down 2 to 3 routes and then deliver 2 to 3 hours on the street, would start at 6:00 am. The Streeters come in at staggered times thereafter. In

**As with many poorly planned projects, it's been a dismal failure at Marina.**

theory, the Casers would have the assignments ready for the Streeters as they arrived at the station to begin their tours. In the eyes of the Postal Service, as has been the case in many other duds that have been dreamt up by someone who has never carried mail, it seemed like a perfect plan. But, as has been the case in so many of these poorly planned projects, it has been a miserable failure.

### No input from local union

As was mentioned earlier, the project was implemented unilaterally by the Postal Service without any local union consultation. This meant that they hand-selected, on the basis of what they call "demonstrated performance", who

**Locally, there was zero consultation with the union.**

would be the Casers and who would be the Streeters. This was done in complete violation of the bidding procedures that are outlined in Article 41 of the National Agreement, without any of the newly created assignments being posted for bid, and without any consideration to seniority. Routes that had existed prior to the implementation of the program were, in some cases completely reconfigured with massive portions of street territory added to the assignment. The relevant language from Article 41 states:

- 41.1.A Section 1. Posting
- A. In the Letter Carrier Craft, vacant craft duty assignments shall be posted as follows:
  1. A vacant or newly established duty assignment not under consideration for reversion shall be posted within fourteen calendar days from the day it becomes

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## Branch Notes

There were steward elections held on January 11 and January 12, 2012 at Pine Station, San Francisco for zone 94108. Ophelia Sosa received 12 votes and is the new steward and Leonard Cruz received 8 votes.

In Novato, steward elections were held on January 25 and January 26, 2012 and members voted for 2 stewards. Ken Schneider received 50 votes, Kathy Rojas received 41 votes, and Luis Herrera received 14 votes. Ken Schneider and Kathy Rojas won the election.

\* \* \*

**WHAT:** 2ND ANNUAL POSTAL UNIONS INVITATIONAL CHESS TOURNAMENT

**WHEN:** APRIL 28, 2012 (tentative)

**WHERE:** NALC BRANCH 214 PAST PRESIDENT RICHARD BECKER'S RESIDENCE IN SAN LEANDRO, CA.

**FEE:** \$10 PER PERSON (pays for the trophy)

IF INTERESTED OR FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE EMAIL RICHARD BECKER AT richbckr@pacbell.net. **UNION MEMBERS ONLY.**

\* \* \*

### Branch Officers

Lili Beaumont ..... President  
 Karen Eshabarr ..... Executive Vice-President  
 Bill Thornton ..... Vice-President  
 Ron Caluag ..... Secretary-Treasurer  
 Charles Gonzalez ..... Field Director  
 Jun Buccat ..... Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
 Stanley Lew ..... Sergeant-at-Arms  
 Franklin Woo ..... NALC Health Benefits  
 Norma Leonardo ..... Safety and Health  
 Sheila Gardner ..... EEO Officer  
 Mike Callahan ..... MBA representative  
 Kim Truong ..... Director of Organization  
 Juan Dominguez ..... Trustee  
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### A word from our advertiser

**Pacific Postal Credit Union** awards several \$1,000 scholarships each year to current college and vocational students and graduating high school seniors who plan to further their education.

Please feel free to share this info with your fellow employees, family members and anyone who may be interested.

The 2012 Application with details about Eligibility and Requirements can be downloaded from our home page at [www.ppcu.org](http://www.ppcu.org). The deadline to apply is Friday, April 6, 2012! Or call Karole Morikawa at (800) 696-6009, or e-mail at [kmorikawa@ppcu.org](mailto:kmorikawa@ppcu.org).

\* \* \*

### Design a Food Drive T-Shirt Contest

Contest was open to children of Branch 214 Letter Carriers Ages 6 through 12.

The theme for art work reflected the Annual Letter Carriers Food Drive, Stamping Out Hunger, Giving Back to the Community, Diversity, the Food Banks, and had a "Bay Area" theme.

Winners will be announced at the April 6th Branch Meeting. Winning artwork will be imprinted on our 2012 Annual Letter Carriers Food Drive T-Shirt.

**Prizes:** First-\$150 gift certificate; Second-\$100 gift certificate; Third-\$50 Gift Certificate.

All entries will receive a \$10 Gift Card.

### WEB NEWS, [www.nalcbayarea.com](http://www.nalcbayarea.com)

Visit our award winning website. Get forms, check manuals, link to national NALC website, see photos of Branch 214 stations, and more, more, more. Some areas are limited to shop stewards and union activists.

\* \* \*

NALC Branch 214 is on Twitter now! First you need a free Twitter account which you can create by going to <https://twitter.com> to sign up, if you don't already have one. You can get updates and information about what's important to letter carriers. Just follow us at @NALCBranch214..

Of course don't forget about our NALC Branch 214 Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/nalcbayarea>. Or just type in NALC Branch 214 in the search box. It's awesome to see our members sharing photos, comments, events and links to websites that have current news about the state of the Post Office.

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There is more and more on this award winning web site.

A lot is happening

## Continued challenges to 6-day delivery

By Lili Beaumont, President

What's happening? This has been a loaded question lately because there is so much happening within the NALC. Firstly, our branch was hit with the Postal Service's unilateral "Caser/Streeter" test program at the Marina station in San Francisco (see Charles Gonzalez's article on the front page of this issue). Our national office is closely monitoring this test program and is assisting all branches nationwide with the contractual violations and grievances arising from this six-month test program.



Secondly and then some are all the legislative battles coming quickly at the NALC. All of them are aimed at reducing delivery service to five days from six days at some point in time, and none of them are focused on restructuring the Postal Service's obligation to prefund its retirees' health benefit fund. In fact, one of the bills was fast-tracked through the House of Representatives and it was passed before we could react to it. As a result, all future newly hired federal employees will be required to contribute 3.8% into their retirement instead of the current .4%.

Despite that loss, we have so far been successful in fending off, or at least, postponing legislation such as Senate bill S 1789. Our branch did a mailing asking all members to write Senators Boxer and Feinstein requesting them to oppose S 1789 in its current language. Apparently, our mailing was well-received because both senators oppose the bill. Thanks go to all of you who acted on the mailing from Branch 214. However, this bill is not dead yet. It will be revisited by the Senate after Easter, so we may need to contact our senators again.

### Consolidation of sorting centers

Our other legislative battle will be decided on May 15, 2012 when Congress will vote on whether or not to lift the current moratorium on post office closures. If the moratorium is lifted, management has announced that postal headquarters has already approved closures of the Eureka and Petaluma Processing & Distribution Centers (P&DC). Once these closures happen, mail for Northern California will be sorted at the Medford, Oregon P&DC, and mail for Marin County and Northern Marin Post

Offices (with 949 zip codes) will be sorted at the Oakland P&DC moving those respective post offices into the Bay Valley District from the San Francisco District. Also, if the moratorium is lifted, more post office consolidations and post office closures will take place; like North Beach station moving into Pine station, Bayview station closing, and the Sausalito post office moving. Obviously, all of these closures and moves will adversely affect customer service and letter carrier routes. Your union is doing what we can to educate Congress on the true affects these closures will have on their constituents.

### Branch membership declining

In addition to our legislative challenges, our branch has been faced with the slow but steady decrease in membership revenue due to attrition. In fact, we have provided presentations about our financial status at the last two branch meetings. We will soon be offering some

## Congress is considering bills that will wipe out 6-day delivery.

operational changes to adapt to our impending financial state and keep Branch 214 as a union that can provide its carriers with the best representation in the future. But even with operational changes and cuts to our operating costs, we need our members to help bring in more revenue by recruiting carriers who don't presently belong to the union. We need all members to take initiative to educate themselves on the issues in Congress so that they can educate the public, and we need all members to get involved with what the branch is doing to stay viable in the future. After all, it's OUR union so WE are all in it together.

## Are you a retiree member of Branch 214?

Join the Retiree Social Meetings for a free lunch and get updated and educated on issues affecting postal retirees. Meetings are held on the first Monday of the even-numbered months—June 4, August 6, and October 1, 2012. Lunch is served at noon and the meetings begin at 12:30pm. Fraternalize with your Chairman, Peter Deutsch, Secretary Vernon Capps, Treasurer Steve Crisafi, and other Branch 214 retirees! There is free parking too at 740 Del Monte Avenue, South San Francisco. Hope to see you there!

What are they thinking?

## Stop blaming letter carriers

By Bill Thornton, Vice-President

The decline in mail volume has had the greatest impact on the loss of carrier routes. (This has been emphasized by the National President.) It is on the margins that some routes are lost because of carrier behavior. Carriers should be consistent in the time it takes to do their routes. "Unsatisfactory job performance" must be documented by management and while it is unusual for carriers to be fired for this charge, it is not impossible. Management has won cases involving wild swings in the time a carrier takes to do a route.



Carriers who actually skip lunches are obviously hurting themselves and by extension the union's effort to save routes.

In this new environment of low volume, carriers should be aware of "numbers". We used to advise carriers to ignore reference volume and ignore DOIS. We can no longer do this. Since the joint route inspections, the trend has been to recommend carriers to be aware of "numbers". It's good to know how the route was adjusted and how much mail you may have on a particular day in reference to that adjustment. But the important thing is consistency as far as hours used with certain volumes.

### Some carriers are going along with factory like speed-up.

The long standing model of one carrier serving customers on a route has been a mixed bag. It has served to provide good service to customers, loyalty to a route and customers, etc. But at the same time, as management supposedly became more sophisticated, some carriers have felt the need to go along with whatever version of the speed-up that comes along with the new factory like system.

#### Nitwits at postal management

We should stop blaming letter carriers for the loss of routes. Management allowed the volume to disappear. The Internet and the reduced amount of first class and the recession's impact on standard mail notwithstanding, the nitwits let UPS and Fed Ex steal the parcel and overnight

business. It is admittedly difficult to run a business under the Postal Rate Commission but they are incompetent nonetheless.

Article 3 of the National Agreement between the NALC and the Postal Service allows management to run the business that the postal service is engaged in. The union essentially is limited to the challenging of management activities in areas relating to wages and working conditions. This is important to understand because many times carriers bring up issues that while disturbing are not grievable.

### Most routes are lost due to less volume.

#### Among those rights

The cry *what's the union going to do about it* can be analyzed from the previous perspective. Sometimes, we must honestly acknowledge, reluctantly, that the union can do little or nothing about a particular issue. But at the same time, it shouldn't be forgotten that there are many carrier protections and rights, some of which are listed below

- **The right to be paid for all the time you work.** Don't laugh—it is commonplace for employers to attempt to not pay you. Coverage by FLSA Fair Labor Standards Act, and the National Agreement guarantees you payment for all time worked. Management must follow specific procedures for disallowance of any time. In our case, the clock rings indicate the time worked.
- Finally, Article 14 and OSHA **guarantees your right to work in a safe workplace.** Use postal form 1767 and, if necessary, OSHA COMPLAINTS TOLL FREE NUMBER 800-475-4020.

Insist on exercising our rights. They are a powerful antidote to management's right to mismanage.

Focus on the issues that the union has control over, including being paid for all your work, holding management responsible for responding to carrier notification of inability to finish assignment. The current environment is basically a speed-up.

Grudgingly, management is not that bad in cost savings. And, after all, it is a business. But carriers should not give them more savings than they deserve while acknowledging that the loss of routes is to the greatest extent based on the drop in mail volume.

So let's not be too hard on ourselves and look for someone else to blame.

Sometimes we overcomplicate things. Knowledge is power, but sometimes it is good to just keep it simple.

Carriers are required to provide an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

**Gonzalez** (continued from page 1)

*vacant or is established, unless a longer period of time is negotiated locally.*

#### **Grievances on ignoring seniority filed**

This of course is totally unfair, and in direct opposition to one of the most, if not the very most, sacred of all

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### **One basic violation is that of seniority.**

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of the union's creeds, choice by seniority. The union is, of course, filing numerous grievances in reaction to the Postal Service's unilateral action.

#### **Union sees failure ahead**

The union was not totally kept in the dark with regard to the plans that the Service had for the program, and as more and more of the plans were unveiled, the union

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### **Grievances galore have been filed on overtime violations.**

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made the prediction of its ultimate failure. First of all, the majority of the carriers at the station would not be happy, as the few choice Caser positions were handed out at management's discretion. Secondly, expectations that the streeters would be able to complete the assignments in a time frame that would not exceed eight hours, were sadly miscalculated, as assignment-after-assignment needed

*Can't finish assignment? Rules haven't changed*

## **Using the M-41, 131.4**

**By Bill Thornton, Vice-President**

Carriers should be aware of the rules that protect them against unwarranted speed-ups by management. There are two basic requirements carriers should follow. You should provide an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. You should notify management when you are unable to complete the assignment. There is no 18/8. It is only used for route exams. The first thing management did when announcing this bizarre change of routers and deliverers, was to tell carriers that routers would have to case 18/8 or "you're outta here". They have no shame.

But as carriers we're not required to make mathematical calculations. The 3996 is an estimate only. Management occasionally accuses carriers of "falsifying" a 3996.

auxiliary assistance or overtime in order for the mail to be delivered on the day that it was taken out.

#### **Ignoring the overtime lists**

This created yet another violation, as management has instructed the carrier that needed the assistance to work the overtime regardless of whether they were on the ODL (overtime) or WA (work assignment) lists. Complicating the problem even further is the fact that not only are the Streeters having problems completing their assignment; the Casers are also not meeting the unrealistic expectations that have been set by management. On numerous days the assignments have not been ready for the Streeters when they have arrived for the start of their tours, and

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### **When mail isn't ready for the streeters, they have to help pull down the route.**

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they have been instructed to assist the Casers in casing and pulling down the assignments. Some have had to stay helping for as much as an hour past their scheduled leaving time, and this has only added to the overtime that has to be worked because of the added street time.

This should not be surprising, as so many of the unilateral decisions that have been made over the years outside of the parameters of the National Agreement have been miserable failures. This is just another of the burdensome obstacles that have been placed in front of the union, and as a union we will fight it with the full power of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

How could that be? Just another dumb stab at insulting our intelligence.

Disputes occur when the carrier estimates that he/she will be unable to complete their assignment within 8 hours and management feels otherwise. The contrary position of management is usually based on DOIS or simply arbitrary. Nor does the contract recognize DOIS as

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### **Your basic job is to provide an honest day's work.**

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the final arbiter of whether or not a Carrier needs auxiliary assistance. When a Carrier believes or determines that they will be unable to complete the assignment within 8 hours, he/she is to follow the requirements as spelled out in Handbook M-41.

#### **M-41 City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities 131.4 Reporting Requirements**

131.41 It is your responsibility to verbally inform

*(continued on page 6)*

**Thornton** (continued from page 5)

management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail.

131.42 Inform management of this well in advance of the scheduled leaving time and not later than immediately following the final receipt of mail. Management will instruct you what to do.

131.43 Complete applicable items on Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control, if overtime or auxiliary assistance is authorized in the office or on the street.

131.44 Report on Form 1571 all mail undelivered-including all mail distributed to the route but not cased or taken out for delivery. Estimate the number of pieces of mail.

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### **If there is no agreement on overtime, a carrier may have to call from the street.**

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131.45 Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager, in which case you must record all facts on the 1571.

Under those circumstances it is imperative that the Carrier obtain clear and concise instruction as to what he or she is to do. After a Carrier has followed the requirements of M-41, Section 131.4, management is then obligated to make a decision following the requirements of M-39, Section 122.33 that identifies numerous options available to management. Refusing to provide a Carrier with PS Form 3996 is not one of them. M-39 Management of Delivery Services 122.33 The employee, upon request, will be provided a Form 3996, Carrier - Auxiliary Control, after the supervisor has been verbally informed as to the reason for the request. The employee shall not be denied the form and, upon request, a duplicate of the completed form will be provided the employee. The instruction "complete the assignment and be back in 8 hours" is not uncommon on the Postal work floor. However, when a Carrier has verbally stated or given a Form 3996 informing that he or she cannot follow that instruction, management must make a decision. The instruction actually contains 2 directives. The Carrier has informed that he or she can do one or the other. It is management's responsibility to decide which one it wants complied with.

#### **Calling in from street**

If time is disputed in the morning and there is no mutual agreement carrier may have to call from the street. Grievances/EEOs (as appropriate) should be filed as appropriate for any harassment/threats that occur during these requests for instructions as well as management's

refusal to provide a form, respond to a form and/or provide/respond to Form 1571.

Carriers get grief: when did you leave, you only had so much mail, I told you, bla, bla bla. Any performance issues should be conducted in private and not while you are on the street or on the phone.

Pre-Arbitration settlement 7/30/2001: "No carrier shall be disciplined for failure to meet standards, except in cases unsatisfactory effort which must be based on documented unacceptable conduct that led to the the carriers failure to meet standards." Additionally, the agreement indicated that "It is understood that no function of POST or DOIS, now or in the future, may violate the National Agreement."

"Use of DOIS does not change the letter carrier's reporting requirements outlined in section 131.4...of M-41..."

#### **When they don't answer the phone**

When you call the station to notify management that you are unable to finish you have complied with 131.41 of the M-41. If the phone rings off the hook (which is the case with most San Francisco stations in the afternoon), etc. and you are unable to talk to a supervisor for instructions what do you do?

If you have a record of the call (cell phone) then that would be a record of your attempt.

Another alternative some carriers utilize after there attempt to call is unsuccessful is to call the union office and we can make a conference call to station. If that is unsuccessful the union office can make a note of the attempt. OR, the union office and carrier can call the Postmaster's office and inform that office that the carrier has been unable to reach the station by phone to inform management of inability to finish. This actually ends up being a civilized process unlike most of the time when

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### **If they don't answer the phone at the station...**

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carriers call to notify management. Normally, the receptionist in the office tells union officer/carrier that the supervisor will be contacted. Voila.

So that is on a record but the carrier when he/she returns should fill out a 3996 and indicate on the form the details of this notification. Get a copy.

A couple of points that may be raised in these regards:

Cell phone use: There is no requirement for anybody to own/possess a cell Phone. Indeed, there is no requirement to own any phone, land or otherwise. So, if you want to be a purist when you need to notify management when you can't finish you can search for one of the few

(continued on page 14)

*As postal crisis intensifies...the resistance is building*

## Communities are uniting to “Save the People’s Post Office”

By Dave Welsh, retiree

Communities that have depended on the Post Office as a source of decent-paying jobs—as well as vital services—are getting organized to demand:

- a. Maintain 6-day, door-to-door delivery & universal service.
- b. Stop postal closings, layoffs and service cutbacks.
- c. This is the people’s Post Office—No privatization. No profiteering off the mail.



1. **In San Francisco:** Bayview, Visitacion Valley & Tenderloin communities organize meetings to resist post office closings. Announced closing of Petaluma processing center has rural postal customers up in arms, as they face 2-3 day delays of mail.
2. **In New York:** Hundreds rally to protest closings in the Bronx,

Harlem & Chelsea areas of the city Big march and rally set for March 17th at the Main Post office—supported by postal unions & community groups.... Closing of mail processing center in the Bronx, and shifting the work to Manhattan results in huge back-ups and delays of mail, later start times for carriers. Anger spills out into the street.... “Operation Zipcode” launched, to organize in each zipcode affected by postal closings.

3. **In Maryland/DC:** Frederick, Md. mail processing plant closed; mail trucked to Baltimore; TV exposés trailers full of 1st class mail sitting for 2 weeks; J.C. Penney Thanksgiving sale mailer is not delivered till February ....APWU local launches campaign with big Town Hall meetings to force

reopening of the Frederick plant....Local union leaders protest at PMG Donahoe speaking event in Washington, DC.

4. **In Vermont:** Local picketing in different towns to protest closings & layoffs have widespread support, including elected officials and often friendly media. Over 500 attend US Senator Sanders event to save post office.
5. **In Portland, Oregon:** NALC-led weekly demonstrations including occupations at post offices slated for closing. Big “Save the P.O.” march through downtown has broad community and labor support. Petitioning inside rural post offices. Sit-in at office of Congressman who isn’t on board with our postal legislation.
6. **In the Midwest:** Plans for actions in Detroit on Tax Day, when big crowds expected at post offices. Michigan and Indiana hit by plant closings; remaining plants can’t handle the extra volume.
7. **In Boston:** Big demonstration at Grove Hall P.O. slated for closing, with turnout from African American churches, city councilors, unions. Anger at disproportionate closings in the Black community.

**In San Francisco we’ve formed a “Save the People’s Post Office” committee,** to organize the resistance to these moves to destroy and privatize the P.O. To get involved, contact the branch office or call 510-847-8657.



From left, Kermei Yu, Kim Truong, and Glen Goss.

Photo by Ivars Lauersons



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

*From left, Carol Maggio, Harry Singh, Juan Domínguez, and Arnold Jones, Marin stewards.*



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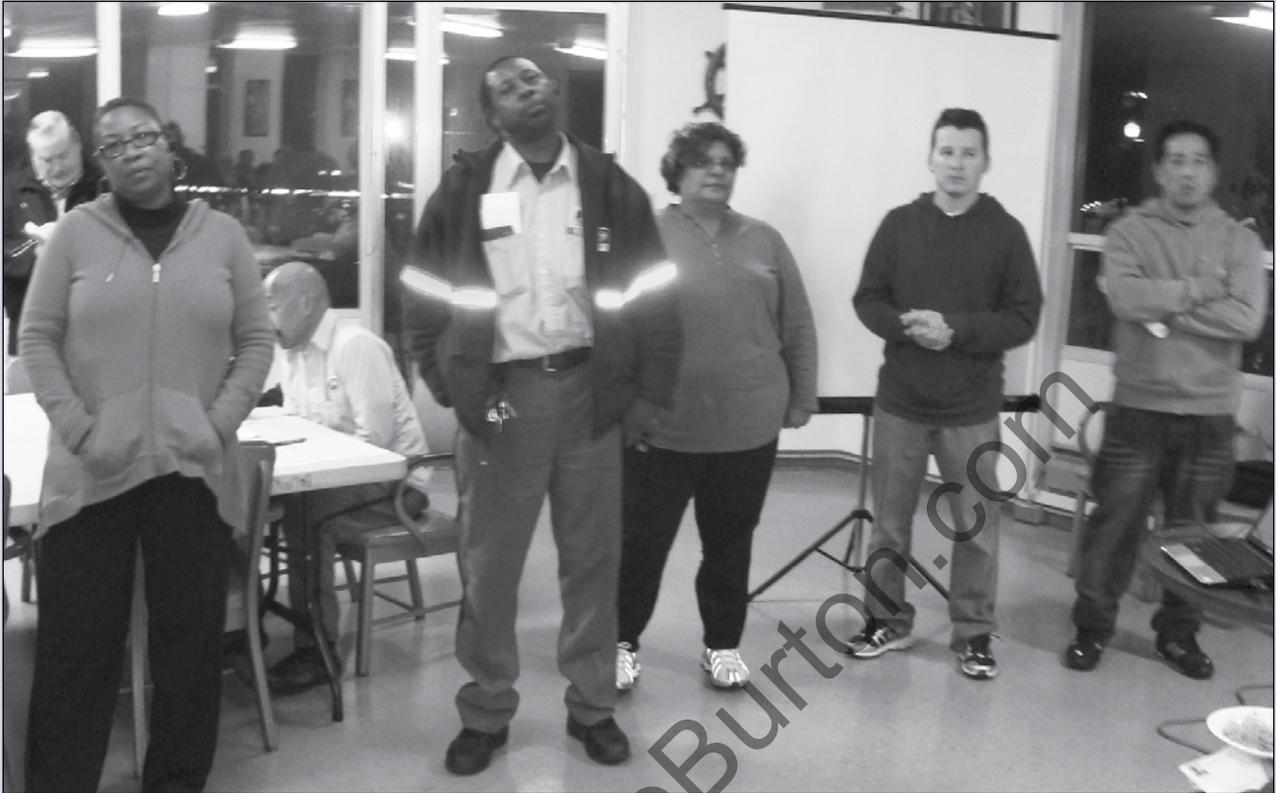


Photo by Ivars Lauersons

From left, Sharon Ivory, Andrew Taylor, Frances Lopez, Anthony Reyes, and Don Limin, mostly East Bay stewards.

## Do you have a Car Loan?

It doesn't matter if it's with another bank, credit union or us – we may be able to lower your payments just by refinancing. With rates as low as **2.74% APR\*** for used auto loans and **2.24% APR\*** for new, it's worth giving us a try.

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\*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. All loans subject to credit approval. Actual rate offered is determined by the applicant's individual credit profile; your rate may be higher. Rates shown includes 1/4% discount with direct deposit to your PPCU Checking account. Must be a PPCU member to apply. Rates are subject to change without notice. Call for complete terms and conditions.

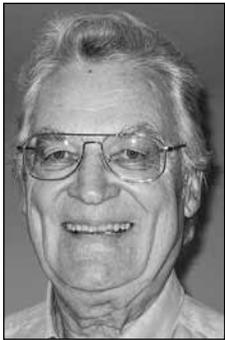
Three topics

## Democracy saved, two letters to editor, news through the internet

By Ivars Lauersons, Editor

*(At press time it was not certain whether the post office would actually suspend the closures of plants unless Congress acted.—Ed.)*

There is some good news for America and the upcoming election coming out of the post office. On March 8, 2012 postal management suspended their planned closing and consolidation of up to 250 mail processing plants until after the November elections. They were scheduled to resume their planned closings in May when their agreement with Congress ended. There was no word whether the closing of rural post offices would continue.



Under the original schedule of closings, and the request by the post office to lengthen delivery standards for first class mail from overnight to at least two days, along with other delayed standards, there was a danger that voting by mail would result in large numbers of votes not being counted because the absentee ballots would arrive past the statutory arrival on election day. Your Uncle Phil, accustomed to mailing his ballot on a Saturday to arrive by Tuesday, would have his ballot arrive on Wednesday or Thursday.

### Absentee ballots

Voting by absentee ballot is a large percentage of votes cast. If an election is close, the absentee ballots can make the difference in the results since absentee voting does

### There was a danger of large numbers of absentee ballots not being counted.

not always follow the pattern of votes on election day. Both Republicans and Democrats rely on absentee ballots, so this is not a partisan issue. But the planned post office closings affect the time that people are accustomed to having their mail delivered. The planned, longer delivery standards are not guarantees of delivery time, and we know that any changes the post office implements result in a series of unforeseen problems which can cause further delay.

It is only partly tongue in cheek to say that democracy has been saved. This postponement of a very bad idea, and an obvious step towards eliminating one day of delivery, was probably forced by Congressional unhappiness with potential problems with the vote count in November. Further, members of the House of both parties were hearing from constituents whose small post offices in their districts were being threatened with closure. We hope that this suspension of closings lasts beyond November.

There is nothing our current postmaster, Patrick Donahoe, is saying that leads us to be optimistic however.

### The elimination of overnight delivery standards is a very bad idea.

There is a lot of persuasion to be done by the NALC and other postal employees to protect the long term future of the post office. Even our President is still going for the ill-advised five day delivery plan in his proposed budget.

### Write that letter

Meanwhile, NALC members, active and retired can inform the public through a variety of mechanisms, including LETTERS to the editor about facts. On March 8, 2012, national President Fred Rolando had a letter published in *The New York Times*. It is a useful summary of our arguments to save the post office. For those who missed the letter, here is what it said:

### TO THE EDITOR:

*"Reforming the Postal Service" (editorial, March 1) properly encourages Congress to address the agency's financial problems, but urges the wrong action.*

*Reducing service won't save the Postal Service but rather destroy it, by driving people away and lowering revenue. Ending Saturday delivery, for example, would cede 17 percent of service to save 2 percent of expenditures, while inconveniencing small businesses, the elderly, rural residents and others.*

*Further, it would jeopardize the Postal Service's ability to capitalize on the growing delivery of goods ordered online. Last month, when announcing a \$200 million operational profit delivering mail in the first quarter of the fiscal year 2012, the Postal Service cited its 7 percent rise in Internet-related shipping. The best day to deliver those packages: Saturday, when people are home.*

*Why did the agency simultaneously report \$3.3 billion in overall red ink? That raises the real problem, one unrelated to the mail.*

*The 2006 Congressional mandate that the Postal*

*(continued on page 11)*

**Lauersons** (continued from page 10)

*Service prefund future retiree health benefits for the next 75 years, and do so within a decade, accounts for 90 percent of all red ink since the measure took effect, including more than \$3 billion last quarter alone.*

*Congress created that problem, and Congress can fix it. Then the Postal Service, which uses no taxpayer money, can focus on adapting to society's evolving needs while continuing to provide the industrial world's most affordable delivery service,*

**FREDERIC ROLANDO**

*President, National Association of Letter Carriers, Washington, March 2, 2012*

#### **Making public aware of basic facts**

The letter hits at some important points that the public is not aware of. When I hear people talking about the post office, they assume the post office is tax-supported and any "bailout" would involve taxpayer money. The post office is mandated to break even, matching revenues with expenditures. Those who use the post office pay for the service, those who don't pay nothing. Another erroneous idea is that if one day of delivery is eliminated it would be Saturday. This is not explicitly stated in the proposals by the postal service.

#### **Another letter**

To make some of these points, I sent a letter to the *Vallejo Times-Herald*, which they published in August 2011. Here is the letter:

*Times-Herald  
Vallejo, CA 94590*

*Your editorial of August 20, 2011 regarding a possible 5-day delivery by the Postal Service as alleviating some of the current fiscal problems is misleading in implying that it is a taxpayer supported entity. You say that a bad alternative of the current situa-*

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### **The public should know that we're not broke, and that we're not tax-supported.**

---

*tion is "a bloated, inefficient taxpayer-funded mail service." The Postal Service gets no tax support. It is self-supporting, funded by income from stamps and other services. Your editorial should be accurate in its facts. And reducing service to five days will not solve any current difficulties.*

*Part of the postal deficit is caused by a recent requirement by Congress to prepay \$5.5 billion dollars a year into its retiree health benefits fund. Besides no other agency having this requirement, it is part of the reason for current losses. If not for this*

*required annual payment, the Postal Service would have broken even during a four year period that extends into this recession. The four year payment requirement was \$21 billion, explaining the loss of \$20 billion. In addition, the GAO has found a long term postal overpayment to the federal pension fund of \$50 to \$75 billion. This can be returned to the postal service for current use by Congress with no impact on the federal deficit or taxpayers*

*The Postal Service, note "service" in the name, is mandated only to break even overall, not to make a profit or to pay any shareholders. It is designed to serve the American people in places large and small, in every area of the country, and every resident on a 6-day a week basis. The proposal to reduce service is not only unnecessary, it is also harmful.*

*If there is no Saturday delivery, your Saturday mail order medicine may not arrive until Monday or Tuesday, your Saturday DVD may not arrive until Monday or Tuesday, your Saturday business mail, including checks, may not arrive until Monday or Tuesday, your Saturday bills may not arrive on Monday or—let me stop while I'm ahead.*

*Sent by U.S. mail.*

*Very truly yours,*

*Ivars Lauersons,*

*Retired letter carrier*

#### **Information and the internet**

There is a lot of information available on the internet. A good source to start with is *NALC.org*, our national website. Letters, such as the above and others, are posted there. The NALC website is also a trove of information about facts we want to get before the public. If you join the E-activists network, you will be notified about breaking news on Congressional action that requires a fast response by email.

Our Branch 214 website—*nalcbayarea.com*—provides continual updates. Our Facebook page, through our intrepid Cathy Simonson, links to current articles throughout the country. And the source of all information postal is Branch 214 past president Roland Garshol, some of which is forwarded to our Facebook page, where his email links us to the follies and dangers of postal management. Originally this article was going to lead you through more of the internet pathways, but there is no space this time.

At press time, Senate Bill 1789 was scheduled to be debated on the floor the week of March 26. In a teleconference on Sunday, March 25, national president Fred Rolando urged e-activists to call their Senators and express opposition to major parts of the bill, such as permitting 5 day delivery. The debate was later postponed to a time after the Senate Easter recess. There is more work ahead for the NALC.

## MORE WORK AHEAD FOR FEWER STEWARDS

As you see on the list on the facing page, the number of stewards in some stations is smaller, reflecting the drop in total number of carriers and the concurrent drop in Branch 214 members.

By contractual provision, stations that had more than one steward may have fewer or only one, making the work more difficult. The number of alternate stewards is not limited, and they can be assigned individual grievances, so their work becomes more valuable. At this time of management pressure, we need all stewards and alternate stewards to help out.



CSALC President John Beaumont, rear, at podium, swore in the new stewards. Facing camera, center, Val Palattao of Mill Valley.

Photo by Ivars Lauersons



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

From left, Anthony Reyes, Don Limin, Barbara Ornelas, David Doucet, Norma Leonardo, Arnold Tiletile, and Angelo Mandala.

# Shop Stewards of Branch 214 for the 2012-2013 Term

\* Denotes Chief Steward Status

# Denotes Formal A Status

<b>Bel-Tiburon</b>	OPEN
<b>Corte Madera</b>	Arnold Jones
<b>Daly City</b>	Cherry Vargas * Edward Villaflor *
<b>Mill Valley</b>	Val Palattao
<b>Novato</b>	Ken Schneider * Kathy Rojas
<b>Redwood City</b>	Roberta Bojo
<b>San Anselmo</b>	OPEN
<b>San Leandro Main</b>	Frances Lopez # * Andrew Taylor Sharon Ivory
<b>San Leandro South</b>	Anthony Reyes # * Dino Toledo
<b>San Rafael Main</b>	Juan Dominguez # * Harry Singh Jun Yap
<b>San Rafael Civic</b>	Carol Maggio
<b>Sausalito</b>	OPEN
<b>Townsend</b>	
<b>94111</b>	Larry Gerigk
<b>94103</b>	Art Ubungen
<b>94104</b>	OPEN
<b>94105</b>	OPEN
<b>Pine</b>	
<b>94108</b>	Ophelia Sosa
<b>94109</b>	Bradford Louis *
<b>94109</b>	Carlos Pellecer

## Collections

<b>AM</b>	Mike Callahan
<b>PM</b>	Mike Callahan

## Bryant Street Annex

<b>Station C</b>	Don Limin * Barbara Ornelas
<b>Station G</b>	David Doucet

## 151 Mendell

<b>Diamond Heights</b>	Sidney Wong
<b>94102</b>	Arnold Tiletile
<b>94122</b>	Angelo Mandala
<b>94121</b>	Kermei Yu
<b>Bayview</b>	Yadira Levesque

## 180 Napoleon

<b>Station F</b>	Eduardo Sobalvarro # * Ghan Gee Chang Curtis Cheung
<b>Station J</b>	Regina Gillespie Ka Ki Kwok
<b>Station E</b>	Angela Bibbs-Meritt
<b>Stonestown</b>	Alejandro Munguia *
<b>Visitacion</b>	Glenn Goss
<b>West Portal</b>	Kim Truong

<b>Parkside</b>	Berta Quezada
-----------------	---------------

## SteinerGate

<b>Station A</b>	Doy Mitra *
<b>Golden Gate</b>	Bobbi Turner

<b>Marina</b>	Art Flores
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<b>North Beach</b>	OPEN
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## Formal A Representative Only

Norma Leonardo #
Enrique Hapa #
Stanley Lew #

**Thornton** (continued from page 6)

remaining pay phones, go to the finance station or possibly ask to use a customer's phone.

#### To finish the route or bring back mail

Do you finish or not:

First of all, if you are able to talk to a supervisor and they anytime in the conversation use the term "finish" you are authorized to take the necessary overtime. (Step 4 October 2, 1972 "...Although there was no expressed authorization to complete the delivery of the mail on an overtime basis, the permission would be inherent in the authorization to continue delivery...")

### ... call the union and we'll jointly call the postmaster's office.

Keep it simple-if they tell you to finish then finish and fill out a 3996 when you return to station with the details.

#### Your responsibility

Now, suppose you ultimately are unable to talk to a supervisor and at that point you don't have any instructions. Do you keep delivering or finish?

If you have an (8) hour medical restriction it's simple: Management cannot force you to violate your medical restrictions. If you don't have such a restriction: Here there seems to be disagreement within the union.

Either way you have performed your responsibility as per 131.4 M-41 by attempting, though unsuccessfully to notify management.

Look at 131.45: Do not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery or collection trip unless authorized by a manager...' So without specific authorization to curtail the mail it sounds like you should finish keeping in mind that the basic mission of the Postal Service is to deliver the mail.

Now, I know that others take a different position, notably our associate editor, who says that for over 28 years she was never disciplined for delay of mail when she called the station and could not contact the supervisor because no one answered the phone. She came back to the station for further instructions. We understand that there are probably a lot more disciplines for unauthorized overtime than for

delay of mail. But, if the carrier has done everything that he/she should have done (following the reporting requirements) the disciplines are mostly thrown out.

The danger of curtailing is that a delay of mail charge when put together with some kind of stuff like unsatisfactory work performance/expanding street time can get problematical.

But management has to have their act together to get the charges to stick. And if you are delivering the route in a consistent/safe/professional manner then the charges probably won't stick.

But the main point is to keep it simple.

With constant route adjustments carrier calculations and the numbers game can get chaotic.

Remember that after they have hired us a carrier responsibility as far as a job performance really is very straightforward:

Provide Postal Service with an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

Notify management when unable to finish in allotted time.

If the carrier is told to *Finish* that means that overtime is authorized.

OUT THERE



Cartoon courtesy Aceto, Branch 782, Bakersfield, CA



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*Vincent L. Baldwin, M.D.*

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## NEWS STEWARDS



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

### Branch 214 Meetings

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

March 7, 2012 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF  
April 4, 2012 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF  
May 2, 2012 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

#### Steward meetings, 4:30 P.M.

March 7, 2012 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF  
April 4, 2012 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF  
May 2, 2012 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

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

April 2, 2012 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF  
June 4, 2012 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF  
August 6, 2012 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF

*From Left, Alejandro Munguia, Curtis Cheung, Ghan Gee Chang, Eduardo Sobalvarro, Ka Ki Kwok, Yadira Levesque, Regina Gillespie, and Bradford Louis.*

### Letter Carrier Food Drive

**Saturday May 12, 2012**

Volunteers are needed to organize the Food Drive at each station. If you are a Letter Carrier on your day off or know someone that has a vehicle who is willing to shuttle food between the Post Offices and the food banks, or can help man the stations, please call Karen Eshabarr or Charles Gonzalez at the Branch Office at the Branch Office. (415) 362-0214.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Victor Dai (180 Napoleon)  
Nelly Tejada (Bel-Tib)

### IN MEMORIAM

Bob Bush (Branch 1427 officer)  
Jean Becker, Richard Becker's mother