



THE VOICE



OF THE GOLDEN GATE LETTER CARRIERS

BRANCH #214

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO

May/June 2007

Award-winning newspaper

Vol. XXXVII, No.3

The Winners



Photo by Ivars Lauersons

◆ *First place winner in Branch 214 T-shirt contest Michael Pham (8 years old) shows his winning entry at branch meeting on April 4, 2007. With him are sister Michelle, mother Phuong, and father Truoc, a carrier at Station J, San Francisco.*



Photo by Roland Garshol

Enrique Bejarano (12) holds his second place entry at a presentation at San Leandro South station on April 14, 2007, as his father, carrier Danny, looks on. The second and third place entries appear on pages 8 and 9.

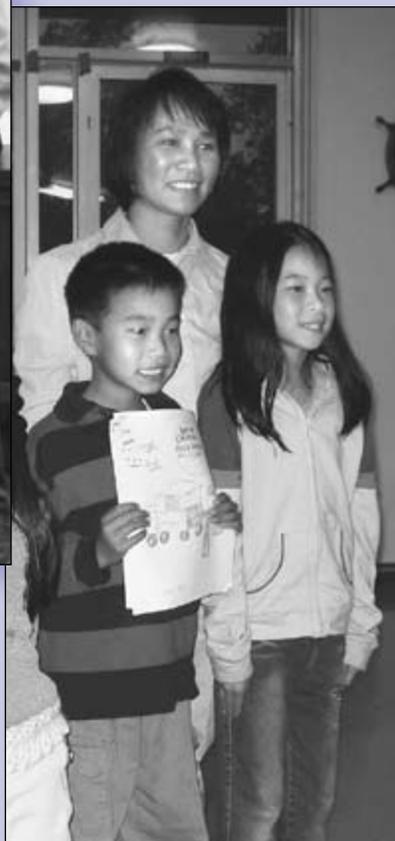


Photo by Ivars Lauersons

◆ *Jimmy Lee (6), son of Visitacion Valley shop steward Amy Chen, holds his third place winning entry at the April 4, 2007 branch meeting presentation. His sister Sophia was also present at the awards presentation.*

ALSO INSIDE:

- **President speaks** page **3**
- **Labor leader** page **4**
- **Postal zodiac** page **7**
- **1970 strike** page **13**

Branch 214 notes

Welcome new steward: Ed Villaflor (Daly City)

Welcome new alternate stewards: Renier Manalo and **Juan Caldera** (Sunset - PCA), **Ka Ming Lau** and **Leo Chak** (EPC South), **Laurie Mackey** (San Rafael Civic).

Diana Suen, daughter of Pine Street carrier **Nancy Huang**, was recently announced as one of the recipients of the **Doherty** and **Saxsenmeier Scholarship** award. Diana will be attending Harvard.

* * *

Please note that the July Branch meeting will be on the second Wednesday in July (July 11th).

* * *

When branch member **Tom O'Doul** retired on March 31, 2007, it was front page news in "The Marin Independent Journal." Under a headline, "Big Send-off," the story by reporter Joe Wolfcale detailed the 43 years of service on the same route in Terra Linda, and the potluck party

that his patron were going to throw him on his last day. Among the details in the multi-page story that Tom is a second cousin of baseball great Lefty O'Doul, and that he plans to spend a lot of time watching the San Francisco Giants play. Tom was a steward and alternate steward for the San Rafael carriers for many years as well .

Kian McCarthy helped out in the associate editor position for this issue of **The Voice** with his incomparable talent.

Our technical help was once again supplied by Secretary-Treasurer **Cherry Vargas** who has yet to say a discouraging word to the Voice editor. Our multiple thanks.

* * *

Transfer wanted. Jeff Richardson, seniority date September 10, 2002, Tacoma, WA (North Central District, Route 518.) Seeking transfer to any city in the West/North/East Bay Area. Phone 253-227-6884.

Branch Officers

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

Voice Staff

Ivars Lauersons Editor
 Gerry Lee Graphics

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GOLDEN GATE BRANCH
 2310 Mason St., 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94133
 Phone: (415) 362-0214
 WEB page: <http://www.nalc214.org>
 Office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday

NALC 214 BRANCH PICNIC



Sun, Aug 19, 2007

Cost: \$ 25.00Adult/Child (2 & under Free)
 Parking: Pre-Purchase \$ 10.00

Includes Lunch: BBQ Chicken, Hotdogs, Ranch Style Beans, Potato Salad, Green Salad, Ice Cream Sandwiches, Sodas

Picnic Grove Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Lunch Served: 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Raffle: 12:00 PM **Park Opens:** 10:30 AM

First Come - First Served

Rules: Ticket Limit is 4 per family; Non-members pay full price of \$41.00; 200 reduced price tickets pre-purchased by the branch available.

Savings: Regular Price without lunch is \$49.99 Adults, \$29.99 Children. Regular Parking is \$15.00

To Order Tickets: Pick up a Picnic Form from your Shop Steward. Send the completed form and a check to the union office for the amount of tickets/parking you need. We will return tickets starting 8-1-07 by mail. Discovery Kingdom formerly known as Marine World.

T.V. 214 Schedule

SAN FRANCISCO, AT&T Cable Channel 29:
 Every third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
 June 17, 2007, July 15, 2007,
 August 19, 2007

A foolish business strategy

Postal service contracting out city carrier deliveries

By Lili Beaumont, President

National contract negotiations have fallen apart because the postal service refused to remove the one item in their contract proposal that our union could never accept and that was the outsourcing of city carrier deliveries or what we have now come to term "contracting out" our city deliveries.

Using private contractors to deliver the mail is not a new concept to the postal service. However, this practice was limited to delivery locations not even serviced by rural carriers. "Contract Delivery Service" (CDS) was otherwise known as "Highway Contract Routes" (HCR). These are routes that provide delivery service into remote rural areas of the country like the back roads leading up to a mountain pass. Historically, these HCR (a.k.a. CDS) are scarce in city stations because most of the areas, if not all, are serviced with city carriers.



Now, the postal service has begun to expand CDS into city delivery areas serviced by career city and rural let-

ter carriers. They allege it would save money as a job is awarded to the lowest bidding contractor. Not only is this CDS contractor low paid (reportedly paid 50% less than a career city carrier), he also receives no benefits. However, other fees paid to the CDS contractor for vehicle expenses and overhead costs eat up whatever labor cost savings might exist. Also, the details of CDS contracts are subject to little or no scrutiny and the hiring process consists of minimal security screening and no veterans' preference. Nevertheless, management's strategy is to utilize CDS on "virgin" deliveries or city deliveries that have never before been serviced by a city carrier. These deliveries may be in the middle of a major metropolitan city or in a newly built subdivision in the suburbs, both areas serviced by city carriers.

As our union prepares its position to fight off "contracting out city deliveries" in arbitration hearings scheduled for this fall, it is more important than ever for all carriers to be in tune with what is going on. Now is the time to sign up as an e-activist. It's free and there is no obligation to do anything other than read up on what's happening. See your shop steward to sign up. They have the paperwork or can get it for you. If you do not have a computer or access to the internet, a letter will be mailed to you to keep you informed. It is critical that we all get educated on this issue and actively follow our national union's steps in what to do to protect our jobs. If we cannot stop the postal service from "contracting out" city deliveries it would consequently mean the permanent loss of career city carrier positions not to mention a postal service without the word "service" in its commitment to customers.

Food Drive T-shirt Contest

By Ray Fong, Executive Vice-President

Letter carrier children ages 6 through 12 entered the first annual Branch 214 "Design a food drive T-shirt contest," competing for a first prize of a Nano Ipod, a \$100, and \$50 gift certificate. The winning design would appear on the 2007 Branch 214 Food Drive T-shirts.

There were 16 entries. The winning design was by **Michael Pham**, age 8, whose father Truoc, works at Station J, Napoleon Street Carrier Complex in San Francisco. Michael was joined by his mother Phuong and sister Michelle at the awards presentation on April 4, 2007. (A photo of them is on the front page.) Michael's winning design appears on the back page. Michael opted to receive a \$150 gift certificate in lieu of the Ipod. His rationale for this decision is so that he can purchase a DVD player to share with his sister.

Second place went to 12 year old **Enrique Bejarano**, whose father Danny works as a letter carrier in the San

Leandro South office. Enrique was presented with his \$100 award on April 14th at the San Leandro South Post Office. (A photo of them is on the front page.)

Third place, \$50 gift certificate was won by **Jimmy Lee**, age 6, son of Visitacion Valley carrier and shop steward Amy Chen. His sister Sophia was also present at the awards ceremony on April 4th. (A photo of them is also on the front page.)

Tom Ryan, AFL-CIO Community Services liaison for the San Francisco Labor Council and Executive Vice President Ray Fong did the initial screening identifying the top four drawings and the Executive Board of the Branch made the final decision in selecting the top three entries.

Without a doubt, all of the entries were winners in our eyes. Each and every one of the drawings was precious and each child should be congratulated for their efforts. All other entrants get a \$10 gift certificate, and everyone received a free "kid" size T-shirt with the winning design.

The unveiling of the "kid" drawn T-shirt was well

(continued on page 10)

*"One of the heroic figures of our time."
—Senator Robert F. Kennedy*

Long Live Cesar E. Chavez, Si se puede!

By Juan Dominguez, Field Director

On March 30, 2007 Field Director Juan Dominguez and EEO Officer Cathy Simonson attended the Cesar E. Chavez Holiday Breakfast in San Francisco. The United Farm Workers (UFW) was founded and made famous by Chavez himself. A poster of Chavez was on display on the podium.

At the February branch meeting the membership voted to send 5 representatives to the Cesar E. Chavez Holiday Breakfast. The five branch 214 representatives were Juan Dominguez, Cathy Simonson, Dave Welsh, Vicki Sawicki and Sergio Gonzalez.



The Holiday Breakfast is held every year usually a day or two before the Cesar E. Chavez Holiday Parade & Festival. Branch 214 members usually attend both functions it is a way to honor labor and the accomplishments of Cesar E. Chavez. The following is a short biography of Cesar E.

Chavez. The source for the information is various references on the internet: County of L.A. Public Library; UCLA Educational Research; *ChavezFoundation.org*.

Recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Aguila Azteca

Cesar Estrada Chavez founded and led the first successful farm workers' union in U.S. history. When he passed away on 23 April 1993, he was president of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO

Cesar was born March 31, 1927, on the small farm near Yuma, Arizona that his grandfather homesteaded during the 1880's. At age 10, life began as a migrant farm worker when his father lost the land during the Depression. These were bitterly poor years for Cesar, his parents, brothers and sisters. Together with thousands of other displaced families, the Chavez family migrated throughout the Southwest, laboring in fields and vineyards. Cesar left school after the eighth grade to help support his family.

He joined the U.S. Navy in 1945, and served in the western Pacific during the end of World War II. In 1948, he married Helen Fabela, who he met while working in Delano vineyards. The Chavez family settled in the East San Jose barrio of Sal Si Puedes (get out if you can).

In 1952, Cesar was laboring in apricot orchards outside San Jose when he met Fred Ross, an organizer for the Community Service Organization, a barrio-based self-help group sponsored by Chicago-based Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation. Within several months Cesar was a full-time organizer with CSO, coordinating voter registration drives, battling racial and economic discrimination against Chicano residents and organizing new CSO chapters across California and Arizona.

Cesar served as CSO national director in the late 1950's and early 1960's. But his dream was to create an organization to help the farm workers whose suffering he had shared. In 1962, after failing to convince the CSO to commit itself to farm worker organizing, he resigned his paid CSO job, the first regular paying job he had. He moved his wife and eight young children to Delano, California where he founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA).

Difficult years

These were difficult years for Cesar and Helen Chavez. Helen worked in the fields during the week and on weekends with her husband to support the family. He often babysat his youngest children as he traveled to dozens of

Chavez led a successful five year strike/boycott.

California farm communities, slowly building a nucleus of dedicated farm worker members. "If you're outraged at conditions, then you can't possibly be free or happy until you devote all your time to changing them and do nothing but that," he said. "But you can't change anything if you want to hold onto a good job, a good way of life and avoid sacrifice."

In September 1965, Cesar's NFWA, with 1200 member families, joined an AFL-CIO sponsored union in a strike against major Delano area table and wine grape growers. Against great odds, Cesar led a successful five year strike-boycott that rallied millions of supporters to the United Farm Workers. He forged a national support coalition of unions, church groups, students, minorities and consumers. The two unions merged in 1966 to form the UFW, and it became affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

Non-violence principles

From the beginning, the UFW adhered to the principles of non-violence practiced by M.K. Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The 1965 strikers took a pledge of non-violence and Cesar conducted a 25 day fast in 1968 to reaffirm the UFW's commitment to non-violence. The late Senator Robert F. Kennedy called Cesar "one of the heroic figures of our time," and flew to Delano to be with him when he ended the fast.

(continued on page 5)

Dominguez (continued from page 4)

By 1970, the boycott convinced most table grape growers to sign contracts with the UFW. That year, to limit the UFW's success to the vineyards, growers in the vegetable industry signed "sweetheart" pacts with the Teamsters Union. When the UFW's table grape agreements came up for renegotiation in 1973, growers signed with the Teamsters, prompting 10,000 farm workers in California's coastal valleys to walk out of the fields in protest.

Grape boycott

Cesar called for a new worldwide grape boycott. By 1975, a Louis Harris poll showed 17 million American adults were honoring the grape boycott. It forced growers to support then California Governor Jerry Brown's collective bargaining law for farm workers, the 1975 Agricultural Labor Relations Act.

Since 1975, the UFW won most of the union elections



Juan Dominguez, Field Director, and Cathy Simonson, EEO Officer, at the Cesar Chavez breakfast, March 30, 2007. The Farmworkers (UFW) flag is on the wall behind them and a picture of Cesar Chavez is visible on the front of the podium.

Photo Branch 214 archives

in which it participated. Despite the farm labor board's bureaucratic delays, farm workers made progress. By the early 1980's farm workers numbered in the tens of thousands were working under UFW contracts enjoyed higher pay, family health coverage, pension benefits and other contract protections.

Problems under another governor

Then, in 1982, with more than \$1 million in grower campaign donations, Republican George Deukmejian was elected Governor of California. Most objective observers agree that under Deukmejian, the farm labor board ceased to enforce the law. In 1984, Cesar called for another grape boycott. In July and August 1988, he conducted a 36 day "Fast for Life" to protest the pesticide poisoning of grape workers and their children.

Cesar lived with his family since 1970 at La Paz, in Keene, California, the union's headquarters in Kern County's Tehachapi Mountains, east of Bakersfield. Like other UFW officers and staff, he received subsistence pay that didn't top \$5,000 a year.

Death at 66

Cesar Chavez passed away on April 23, 1993, at the age of 66. More than 40,000 people participated in Cesar's funeral at Delano. He was laid to rest at La Paz in a rose garden at the foot of the hill he often climbed to watch the sun rise.

In 1991, Cesar received the Aguila Azteca (The Aztec Eagle), Mexico's highest award presented to people of Mexican heritage who have made major contributions outside of Mexico. On August 8, 1994, Cesar became the second Mexican American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States. This award was presented posthumously by President Bill Clinton. Helen F. Chavez and six of her eight children traveled to the White House to receive the honor.

Union carries on

Many skeptics declared the union dead after Cesar passed away, but such reports were proven to be premature. On Cesar's birthday, March 31st, 1994, under the leadership of his son-in-law and successor Arturo S. Rodriguez, the UFW marched 343 miles from Delano to Sacramento, echoing Cesar's historic 1966 peregrination and demonstrating the strength of the UFW and the fact that Cesar's dream of a national union for farm workers remains a possibility. The UFW continues to win elections and negotiate contracts for farm workers.

In 1994, Cesar's family and the officers of the UFW created the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation to inspire current and future generations by promoting the ideals of Cesar's life, work and vision. The Foundation's headquarters is at La Paz, the future location of the Cesar E. Chavez Library and the Cesar E. Chavez Training and Education Center.

Is your boss bad for your health?

Attendance pogrom

By Juliette Chen, Golden Gate Station

From time to time we read about carriers who have worked 30, 40, 50 years without calling in sick once. We see pictures of their smiling faces next to some postal bigwig with their hands extended to accept a Target gift card. It's improbable that these carriers have never been sick during their long careers; it's more likely that they came to work even when they were sick, and in doing so probably infected other carriers who had to call in sick as a consequence. And these "super" carriers, who have no regard for the welfare of their fellow workers, are supposed to be our role models?



Post office or sick bay?

We all know the post office is not the healthiest place to work: many stations have no windows and no access to natural light or outside air; ventilation is poor and air ducts are never cleaned; the tops of cases are rarely, if ever, vacuumed. During allergy season, the sneezing, sniffing and coughing that resound in every station make us sound like a TB ward. Do most stations even have a first aid kit? And even if there is one, do supervisors and managers know where it's been squirreled away?

Worked to death

Carriers get sick even at the best-run stations, but sick

Sick leave and injury rates tend to escalate in tandem with stress levels.

leave and injury rates tend to escalate in tandem with stress levels when a station is poorly managed. At my station, for instance, carriers are forced to pivot all year round. If you're on the ODL list, you can't get overtime unless you agree to do an hour of undertime first—regardless of how much mail you're curtailing. If you've signed up for "own assignment only"—fuhgeddaboutit—you never get overtime to work on your own route. Under this system, some carriers are pulled down and out the door by 9:30 or 10am. Light-duty carriers are asked to case and pull down 3 or more routes a day. Some PTFs

(Ed. Note: "pogrom" is a Russian word meaning an organized massacre.)

are asked to deliver two routes with 3rd bundle marriage mail in an 8-hour day.

Toxic management

Our last acting manager had a habit of harassing carriers during their morning breaks, either by asking them to put up more mail or by loading mail onto their case,

You can't get overtime unless you agree to do an hour of undertime first.

or just by hovering like the grim reaper over their shoulders. She was constantly interfering because she didn't think anyone—whether you're a carrier, clerk or mail handler—could do their job when, in fact, she didn't know how to do her own job. Such was her anally retentive focus on minutiae that she was blind to the larger picture. If you're a new transplant from another station due to route cuts, you're subjected to her god-like desire to remake you in her image. In which, I might say, she succeeds spectacularly; we're all getting dumber and less competent by the day. Like it or not, the state of a station does reflect on its leadership. If you walk around a station and it's a mess, with broken equipment, ringing phones that no one answers and demoralized workers, it's a telling commentary on the people in charge. Such is the reputation of our station that, no one, in their right mind, would want to bid on our vacant routes from another station. As a result, there were days when the station was down 18 routes out of a total of 43 routes.

Double standards, as always

I knew this acting manager from the time she was a 204-b, and she has been outstandingly incompetent throughout her postal career. At my previous station where she was the manager, she's been known to call the station on a Saturday morning to give instructions in Tagalog to specific Filipino carriers over the phone, and bypass her own supervisors, who were Hispanic. At another station, she was rumored to have left relay sacks on the street next to a relay box (she forgot the relay box

No one, in their right mind, would want to bid on our vacant routes.

key) where, of course, they got stolen. If a PTF had done that, he or she would have been summarily fired. In her case? She got promoted to acting manager and was put in charge of the #1 station in the city when the long-time manager was assigned to another detail.

(continued on page 10)

Postal Zodiac

What kind of beast is your boss?



Watches you 24/7; doesn't blink.



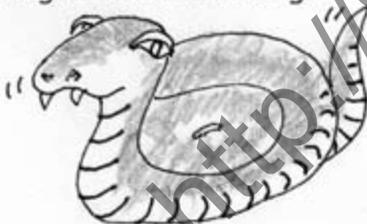
Weasels out of trouble.



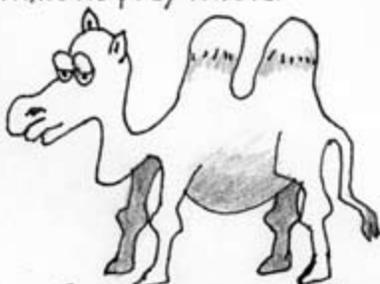
Standard line: "The sky is falling!"



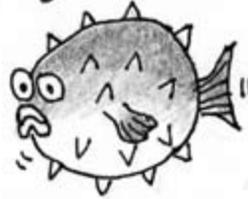
Assigns blame but hogs credit.



Swallows prey whole.



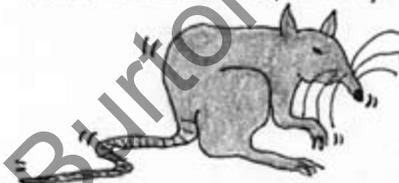
Spits first; asks questions later.



Puffs up with hot air and venom.



Sheds tears as it devours you.



Twitchy and sneaky; gnawing insecurities.



Drains you to the last drop.



Attacks in packs; otherwise a coward.



Sticks head in sand; leaves bum completely exposed.

Cartoon by Juliette Chen, Branch 214



*Third place winner
Jimmy Lee's entry in
Branch 214 Design a T-
Shirt contest for the 2007
food drive. Blue uniform
and light tan background
in the original entry*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Louie D. Abano (EPC)
Tiffany G. Ante (PCA)
Alfredo E. Aoay (PCA)
Orico R. Aquino (Redwood City)
Alfredo G. Basurto (Collections)
Robert A. Boateng (180 Napoleon)
Kurt W. Daniels (Pine St.)
Dennis W. Eng (San Rafael)
Daniel Fong (North Beach)
Marco Ham (Redwood City)
Misun J. Henderson (San Rafael)
Hnin Htwe (180 Napoleon)

Paul A. Kwok (Bryant St.)
Harland K. Lee (PCA)
Michele A. Leonardo (Daly City)
David T. Luu (Bayview)
Gilda Mejia-Stefani (Bayview)
Antonio Melchor (San Rafael)
Wai Kit Ng (PCA)
Alfa Neil Orolfo (San Rafael)
Zhong Wen Pang (PCA)
Natrisa Quintero (Marina)
Cheryl I. Reyes (Bryant St.)
Robert D. Reynolds (Marina)

Giles S. Ruch (Collections)
Antonio R. Santos (Collections)
Hai Wen Song (Pine St.)
Tierra S. Swan (180 Napoleon)
Christopher J. Swavely (Diamond Heights)
Shawn D. Tan (North Beach)
Julie W. Tang (PCA)
Frank S. Tong (EPC)
Kimberly J. Winston (180 Napoleon)
Siu Kay Wong (Pine St.)
Charles Zhu (Golden Gate)



Second place winner Enrique Bejarano's entry in Branch 214 Design a T-shirt contest for the 2007 food drive. The original is multi-hued, with no single color dominating.

Branch 214 Meetings

Branch meetings, 7:00 P.M.

- June 6, 2007 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
- July 11, 2007 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF
- August 1, 2007 ILWU Hall, 400 North Point, SF

Steward meetings, 4:30 P.M.

- June 6, 2007 2310 Mason Street, 3rd Floor
- July 11, 2007 2310 Mason Street, 3rd Floor
- August 1, 2007 2310 Mason Street, 3rd Floor

Retiree social meeting, 12:30 P.M.

- June 4, 2007 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
- August 6, 2007 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF
- October 1, 2007 740 Del Monte Ave., South SF



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IN MEMORIAM

Samuel (Doc) Toatley
(Bayview)

Chen (continued from page 6)

Slip-sliding away

Well, it didn't take long for the #1 station to go downhill under the acting manager. VOE survey results, delivery confirmation, MSP scans, and all the other numbers

The state of a station reflects on its leadership.

that matter to upper management, started sliding. The only things that went up were stress and injury levels, and sick leave. Naturally, a crackdown was inevitable. A flurry of letters of warning were issued to people who had called in sick, even to one carrier who had a doctor's note.

Boss as workplace hazard

On the rare occasion when our glorious leader was absent, the relief in the station was palpable. I'll warrant

Your boss can adversely affect your health and life expectancy.

that if someone brings a blood pressure monitor to the station and takes readings on a day when she's there and a day when she's not, you'll see a significant difference in blood pressure levels. Multiply perennially elevated

blood pressure levels over the long term, and you've got a health epidemic on your hands. Hypertension and chronic stress can spawn a host of major illnesses like diabetes, stroke, heart attacks and depression. Think your boss can adversely affect your health and life expectancy? You betcha. Unfortunately, for all the guidelines that OSHA puts out about workplace safety, there's little mention about what constitutes acceptable levels of workplace stress. It's up to us, individually and in unison, to speak up and demand that toxic and hazardous bosses be removed from our midst.

Fong (continued from page 3)

received by the membership. The members, in addition to other NALC branches thought that the idea to have one of our letter carrier kids design the T-shirt was a great and wonderful idea. What else is better than to see the "food drive" through the eyes of a child, especially a child whose mom or dad carries mail and works that much harder on the second Saturday of the May to help "Stamp Out Hunger."

We hope that this is the beginning of a long tradition for our Branch and may the children of our membership design our food drive T-shirts for years to come.

Finally, the branch raised \$980 from the sales of the T-shirts. The proceeds will be evenly divided and donated to the four food banks and community centers that we serve.

*Lucy Trinh,
Visitacion
Valley carrier,
on vacation in
Vietnam recently,
standing (where
else?) in front
of the main post
office in Ho
Chi Minh City
(Saigon).*



Photo courtesy Lucy Trinh

How government works

Legislative education

By Carol Ann Maggio, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Government Pension Offset

Employees who are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and who retired after December 1982 are affected by the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The GPO will reduce or possibly eliminate the Social Security spouse or survivor benefits for which a federal retiree may be eligible based on the Social Security record of his or her spouse. The retiree's Social Security "spousal" benefit is cut by up to two-thirds of the retiree's CSRS annuity. Many attempts have been made by congressional representatives, including Senator Diane Feinstein and Rep. Howard 'Buck' McKeon (CD25), to address this unjust law. And just when you think it can't get worse...



Windfall Elimination Provision

In 1983 the formula for computing Social Security benefits was changed. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) reduces Social Security benefits of those who receive an annuity under the CSRS and who also earned Social Security benefits from other employment. Anyone who becomes 62 after 1985 and becomes eligible for their government annuity after 1985 fall under

If you're CSR, your Social Security may get reduced.

this provision, which can reduce a worker's earned Social Security benefit by as much as 55.6%. Again, Senator Feinstein introduced legislation to repeal the GPO, and she is joined by Rep. Howard Berman (CD28) in this endeavor. And more worries...

Premium Conversion

Retired letter carriers, like other federal retirees, pay an average 29 percent share of Federal Employees Health Benefit Program premiums. This percentage is withheld from their annuity checks after income taxes are withheld. As part of the collective bargaining agreement with the USPS, active letter carriers pay for their health insurance with "pre-tax dollars" termed Premium Conversion and these wages are excluded from both income and Social Security payroll taxes. Retirees are not eligible for premium conversion benefits, which could reduce

income taxes owed. Legislation has been introduced to allow federal and military retirees (and active duty military) to pay their government health care premiums with pre-tax dollars. This would provide the typical federal retiree with hundred of dollars in tax savings each year.

NALC Lobbying Efforts

The NALC Legislative Department is actively lobbying Congress on these important retiree issues. For more information on all NALC legislative issues, go to the

Joining our political action group, COLCPE, is a way to fight back.

NALC website: www.nalc.org and under the Departments drop down menu, click on Legislation & Politics.

COLCPE

The Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE) is the one most important contributions you can make from your paycheck or bank account each pay-day or once a month. This is the political action fund of the NALC.

Retirees also have the option of a deduction from their annuity or bank account. Information on signing up is also located at the NALC website (directions in above paragraph).

Locating your Congressional Representative

Go to www.Congress.org. In the left column click on Congress. In the center column under My Representative, enter your home zip code in the box provided and press Go. Your two Senators and you House Representative will appear. If you click on the any of their pictures, it will give you their local and DC mailing address, and other important information.

Arbitration Update May, 2007

Richard Bloch was appointed the neutral arbitrator for determining the next contract for letter carriers, the "NALC Bulletin" announced in the April 27, 2007 issue. Testimony by the two sides will be given in the weeks of September 10, September 24, October 29 and November 5.

The final award in the arbitrations is expected in mid-November. Meanwhile, the provisions of the current contract remain in force. Any retroactive pay adjustments will be decided by the arbitrator.

Note: The NALC Bulletin is usually posted on station bulletin boards and should be consulted for more details.

Looking around

Presorted flats, contracting out and a 5 o'clock window

By Ivars Lauersons, Editor

It's time again to write that article where others supply the words. If it's done without attribution, and it's found out, it's called plagiarism. If it's done with footnotes, it's called research.

Here is my research resulting from having time to read a number of fine NALC branch newspapers. The topics that stood out were a report on a test of presorted flats in Carmel, Indiana, and an arbitrator's decision on a 5 o'clock delivery window and the post office choosing to ignore the decision in the Branch 20, Connecticut area. And there is a report from California on contracting out our letter carrier jobs.



FSS-Flat Sequencer Sorter

We might as well get used to this jargon. FSS is the new DPS, as applied to flats. There was a three-month test of how well sequenced flats would work in the field in Carmel, IN, home of Branch 116, in early 2006. In a copyrighted article, Roberta Clemmer wrote her observations in the summer 2006 issue of *The Summit City Mailbag*, one of the best branch newspapers in the country. Below are my impressions of some of the highlights, but the whole article is available at www.nalc116.org.

Seven bundles

Most of the test was conducted on mounted routes, and the author observed that it would be more difficult on a foot route. What struck me was the number of bundles handled. On the first day the carrier worked off seven bundles: FSS, cased mail, DPS, advo cards (marriage mail cards), advo flats, parcels and hot case mail. "It was horrible," she wrote.

She did write that on an average day carriers took three bundles: DPS, FSS, and cased mail, and

subsidiary bundles of parcels and hotcase mail.

Less office time

She noted that carriers taking FSS mail directly to their vehicles left the office earlier than usual. It was also her observation that the extra time it took to handle the mail on the street was more than the time gained in the morning. Additional problems were how the carriers loaded their trucks, and the shape of the trays the FSS came in.

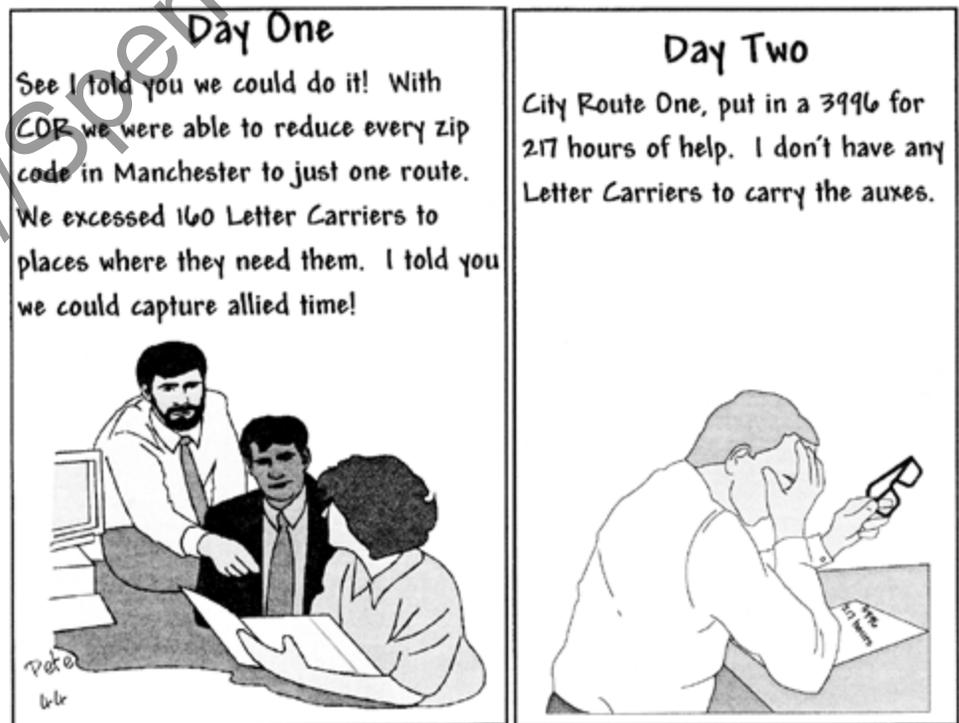
One size fits all

There was no allowance made for casing the flats. They would be taken directly to the street, no matter what. If a route were later split, then the flats would have to be unloaded from the vehicle. In an ideal future post office, one of the outside testers told her, there would be no more post office buildings. Carriers would report to a truck terminal, unload a route off a semi-trailer, and load the mail directly into a vehicle. Have a nice day!

The 5 p.m. window

We all know about efforts by management to get all carriers off the street by 5 p.m., even if it means falsifying the data by telling carriers not to clock in when they return, and then have management enter erroneous data. Connecticut Merged Branch 20 challenged this window in a grievance procedure and won an arbitration rescinding the order. President Paul Daniels wrote about it in an article in the March 2007 *Union Courier*; "An Inconve-

(continued on page 13)



The word COR in the first panel refers to management's "Carrier Optimal Routing System," which uses maps and no common sense to adjust routes.

Cartoon courtesy The 44 Magnum, Branch 44, Manchester, NH.

Lauersons (continued from page 12)

nient Truth, PO is staffing for 2010.”

One would think that the post office would accept the results of an arbitration, but instead they refused to comply fully, and the issue is headed back to arbitration. The post office tried again with another arbitrator to get a different decision and failed again. Paul Daniels describes the labor relations in the district as having become a bizarre world where “the Postal Service ‘B’ Team member is ordered to write gibberish in order not to resolve overtime and casual grievances; arbitration advocates are ordered not to settle any cases no matter how blatant the contract violation and told when they lose to simply refuse to implement the arbitrator’s award.”

No staffing until 2010

The conclusion of Paul Daniels’ article is that the post office is reducing the current number of employees in anticipation of savings in 2010, when the full implementation of FSS is anticipated. Meanwhile, we will be overworked, understaffed, and overstressed. Have a nice day!

Rincon (private delivery) towers

The nightmare of having our jobs taken away is proceeding in other parts of the country under the name of contracting out. The new skyscrapers being built at the San Francisco end of the Bay Bridge are considered new construction, and could be assigned to private contractors instead of becoming part of the existing route.

Very close to us, in Fresno in central California, this process is going on. As reported in The Fresno Bee newspaper on 3/10/07, a grandmother who relocated from Los Angeles to be nearer her grandchildren and parents, picks up mail at the Woodward Park Station and delivers to 50 addresses in the Copper River Ranch development on the city’s northern fringes.

In nearby Clovis contracting out is scheduled to an 1,800 home development.

According to the newspaper, the grandmother drives her own vehicle, buys her own insurance, and if she wants a vacation must find, train and pay her replacement, subject to approval by the postal service. Her only connection to the post office is a post office badge.

This story by John Ellis was taken from the Fresno Bee website, and was printed in “Dispatch,” the newspaper of Branch 1280, Burlingame, CA, in the Winter-Spring 2007 issue. The Fresno Bee website is www.fresnobee.com.

Casuals

This situation of letter carriers with no uniforms delivering mail first reminds us of casuals delivering mail. Casuals are trained and screened by the post office and they have accountability for their service each day when they return to the station. These contract carriers don’t have even that. They could be anybody. They could throw

When members are unhappy

Rank and file action and wildcat strikes

By Bill Thornton, Vice President

At the time of the Postal Strike of 1970, letter carrier salaries started at \$6176 going to \$8442 after 21 years. In the northeast there were reports of carriers being on welfare because of the inadequacy of their earnings. The run up to the strike can be examined in various sources including the main stream press and union publications but particularly the Newsletter of Branch 36 in New York. Historical events start somewhere and for *The Strike That Stunned the Country*, this was the place. One of the leaders of that action, Vince Sombrotto, would go on to become the most revered President in the history of the union.



The strike that stunned the country

The action of 1970 has been described as a *revolutionary act*. Indeed, before it was over, the national union would describe the people involved as being controlled by the *Students for a Democratic Society*, like calling somebody a communist.

The *tipping point* came on July 1969 in reaction to a small wage increase approved by President Nixon. This was the old *Post Office Department*, a government agency under a cabinet member, the Postmaster General. Wage increases came through Congress and ultimately the approval of the President. The Postal Unions did not have collective bargaining rights.

Rank and file action

(From *1970 Postal Strike* New York Letter Carriers Branch 36 March 2000 issue of newsletter)

“The strike itself was one of those rarities in American labor history—an actual uprising of rank-and-file workers who forged what was a true revolutionary act, and who acted with courage and conviction despite the resistance of their elected leaders. This revolution sprang from the despair felt by carriers in New York and in many other

(continued on page 14)

away your mail, and you’d never know. They could take your credit card. And worse. And more. Have a nice day!

Stay in close touch with what our national union is doing to counter this trend.

Thornton (continued from page 13)

parts of the country who could not support their families. In fact, for those current members of Branch 36 who were not carrying the mail in 1969 and 1970, words cannot truly convey the suffering of letter carriers and their families at that time. Because of the high cost of living in New York City, many carriers were forced to work two jobs or go on welfare, if not both. Ironically, it was only the federally-sponsored "War on Poverty" of the 1960's which enabled the families of some letter carriers in New York to survive. Every revolution has its triggering events, and for the 1970 postal strike it was the courageous actions of a small group of Bronx letter carriers that began the process of converting frustration and despair into citywide collective action.

"On July 1, 1969, in reaction to a meager pay increase issued by President Richard Nixon, almost all of the letter carriers and postal clerks at the Kingsbridge Station in the Bronx called in sick. Then, when on the very next day, the Postmaster suspended all 56 letter carriers and 16 clerks at Kingsbridge, 16 of the 36 letter carriers in the Throggs Neck Branch in the Bronx also called in sick.

"Significantly, the rank-and-file members of Branch 36 were not frightened by the Post Office Department's investigations and suspensions because for the first time

The 1970 strike was described as a true revolutionary act.

in years, they had gained a sense of control and pride. The actions of the Bronx carriers had instilled a sense of euphoria among many New York carriers. For it became clear that if thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of postal employees could only show the same sense of courage and solidarity that the Bronx carriers had demonstrated, then throughout the country true power would rest in the hands of postal employees."

Local leadership split

"But the Kingsbridge and Throggs Neck incidents were important for another reason: The branch leadership's reaction to the suspensions created a growing split between Branch 36's leadership. Frightened of the possibility of an illegal strike, the increasingly militant rank-and-file, who were willing to take whatever steps were necessary to shatter the chains of economic slavery. The key issue dividing the two groups was whether the branch would compensate the suspended carriers for the wages they had lost during their two-week suspensions. Vincent R. Sombrotto, then a rank and-file carrier who did not hold an office in the branch, first raised the issue at a special meeting of the branch, but the branch's leadership opposed Sombrotto's proposal and, in fact, criticized the

Bronx carriers for what the leaders called precipitous and rash action. At first, Branch 36's officers prevailed, but Sombrotto and his growing army of allies persisted meeting after meeting until, at the Branch's January 1970 meeting; they were successful in signing the two-thirds vote necessary to pass the proposal providing compensation for the suspended carriers."

As events unfolded, including intra-branch dispute over paying the suspended carriers for wages lost, history, as it turned out, was being made. The Branch ultimately voted to compensate the carriers and rejected the branch

President Nixon ordered the National Guard to case mail.

leadership endorsement of an agreement between the NALC President and Nixon. A vote was taken in Branch 36 on March 17, 1970 and a strike was authorized and began on March 18. Almost all carriers stayed out and the action quickly spread to other branches/areas including Long Island and New Jersey.

The National Union found themselves in a difficult position. President Rademacher urged carriers to return to work, but at the same time called them subversives.

Rademacher also threatened Branch 36 leaders with expulsion from the NALC and sent national officers out to the field to quash support for the strike.

On March 23, 1970 Nixon declared a national emergency and called in the National Guard.

San Francisco

In San Francisco, the support of the strike was not as universal as New York, but it was spirited. I remember being on a picket line and the Branch 214 President telling me personally that he could not advise me to do something that was wrong. Despite our differences, I remember him fondly as a short, stocky cigar chewing guy who had been a downtown carrier for years and sold beer at the ballpark. A real down to earth guy. In retrospect, we know that branch presidents were under the gun to follow the dictates of the national union. In San Francisco the labor action ended with a well attended meeting

In San Francisco the strike was spirited, but less universal.

(I think at California Hall). The lawyers seemed to have the final word, the main argument being the necessity of returning to work based on the threats of the Branch being fined. It was over. A lone carrier returned to picket at Rincon Annex.

The actions by letter carriers in 1969 and 1970 were so called *rank and file* actions and the strike was a *Wild-cat Strike*, actions taken outside of the official union structure.

Approved Budget— April 1, 2007–September 30, 2007

	Spent 10/1/06- 03/31/07	Projected 4/1/07- 9/30/07
Expense		
1. Salaries, FT, PT, Stewards, Assignment Time:		
President's Salary (FERS)	28,903.00	29,310.00
Executive Vice President's Salary (CSRS)	29,188.00	29,615.00
Vice President's Salary (CSRS)	29,188.00	29,615.00
Secretary-Treasurer's Salary (FERS)	28,160.00	28,555.00
Field Director Salary (FERS)	28,160.00	28,555.00
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer's Salary (CSRS)	12,704.00	13,595.00
Health Benefits Representative Salary	1,106.00	1,165.00
Sgt/Arms, MBA, EEO, S&H, Trustees, Dir of Org (8)	4,989.00	5,230.00
Shop Steward Salary	31,178.00	32,660.00
Assignment Time/Paid Time and Services (excl. Voice, Ed)	12,456.38	22,500.00
Leave Replacement	4,978.36	5,000.00
TOTAL	211,010.74	225,800.00
2. Officer, Steward Expenses		
President's Expenses	1,253.67	1,320.00
Executive Vice President's Expenses	1,195.01	1,320.00
Vice President's Expenses	1304.87	1,320.00
Secretary-Treasurer's Expenses	1,078.43	1,320.00
Field Director Expenses	1,298.52	1,320.00
Asst. S/T Expenses	660.00	660.00
Misc. Expenses (Other Officer & Stewards)	583.91	600.00
Leave Reimbursement	598.60	600.00
Officer's Leave Fund (30% of potential liability)	—	—
TOTAL	7,973.01	8,460.00
3. Taxes & Officer's Benefits		
Officer's Benefits	38,945.32	40,000.00
Payroll Taxes	21,057.48	22,000.00
Property Taxes	5,043.81	5,150.00
TOTAL	64,196.00	67,150.00
4. Building/Office Expense		
Architect/Tenant Improvements	—	10,000.00
Building Maintenance & Repair	3,823.79	5,000.00
Hall Rental/RWC Office	2,850.00	2,850.00
Loan Payment/Mortgage	15,925.00	15,925.00
Janitorial Service Office	2,800.00	3,500.00
Office Utilities (Phone/Water)	4,367.10	4,400.00
Printing	4,982.08	5,000.00
Insurance (Disability/Business Liability/Bonding)	8,432.00	5,000.00
Insurance (Representational Liability)	9,876.60	—
Maintenance (Security/Service Contracts/Serv-Maint)	5,945.12	6,000.00
Computer Expenses	9,942.57	8,555.00
Office Supplies/Equipment/Office Expense	10,234.84	11,000.00
Payroll Services	3,025.00	3,155.00
TOTAL	82,204.10	80,385.00
5. Building Corporation		
BC Architect - Base Building	—	—
BC Pre-Construction Costs	—	—
BC Elevator	745.00	750.00
BC Garbage	264.00	265.00
BC Insurance	3,789.00	—
BC Janitorial	1,550.00	1,550.00
BC Office Expense	—	25.00
BC Professional Fees	—	—

BC Serv Maintenance	298.00	1,500.00
BC Utilities (PG&E/Water/Elevator Phone)	4,428.76	4,500.00
TOTAL	11,074.76	8,590.00

6. Fees & Dues		
Professional Fees	—	2,500.00
Affiliate Dues	5,221.00	5,225.00
TOTAL	5,221.00	7,725.00

7. Convention & Conferences		
Convention Fund	12,600.00	12,600.00
Seminars & Conferences (HBR Seminar/State Leadership Conf)	3,729.34	3,000.00
Committee of President's Meeting/National Rap Session - odd yrs	2,093.47	850.00
TOTAL	18,422.81	16,450.00

8. Education		
Training, Seminars	22,967.46	30,000.00
Issue Education/Labor 2007-2008	5,462.04	3,800.00
Other: Books, Materials, NALC Supplies	439.45	1,000.00
TOTAL	28,868.95	34,800.00

9. Communications		
Voice: Lost Time	3,029.56	3,100.00
Expenses	11,874.23	12,500.00
TV 214	1,200.00	1,200.00
TOTAL	16,103.79	16,800.00

10. Entertainment		
Good of the Order/Other Refreshments	3,928.30	4,000.00
Annual Dinner Honoring Retirees and Stewards	750.00	—
Recreation/Picnic	2,000.00	2,000.00
Steward Brunch (previously in Education Budget)	5,000.00	—
TOTAL	11,678.30	6,000.00

11. Representational Expenses		
Representational Expenses	424.93	500.00
Contract / Picket Action / Legislative Action	—	2,000.00
TOTAL	424.93	2,500.00

12. Other		
Retirement and Other Gifts	3,845.00	4,000.00
New Member Services / Recruitment	950.00	1,000.00
Branch Elections	—	1,000.00
Food Drive	300.00	3,000.00
100% Union Celebration (\$4/person)	—	250.00
Branch Items	—	5,125.00
Miscellaneous	385.42	500.00
Pending By-Law Changes in Steward Pay, Conv. Fund, etc.	10,000.00	—
TOTAL	15,480.42	14,875.00
TOTALS	473,509.42	489,535.00

Projected Income			
	# of Members	Per Member	Projected Income
Active Members (13 pay periods @ 19.32)	1,955	251.16	484,740.00
Retired Members	375	2.25	845
Interest Income			950
Miscellaneous Income			3,000
TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME:			489,535
Total Projected Expenses			(489,535)
Projected Surplus			—

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

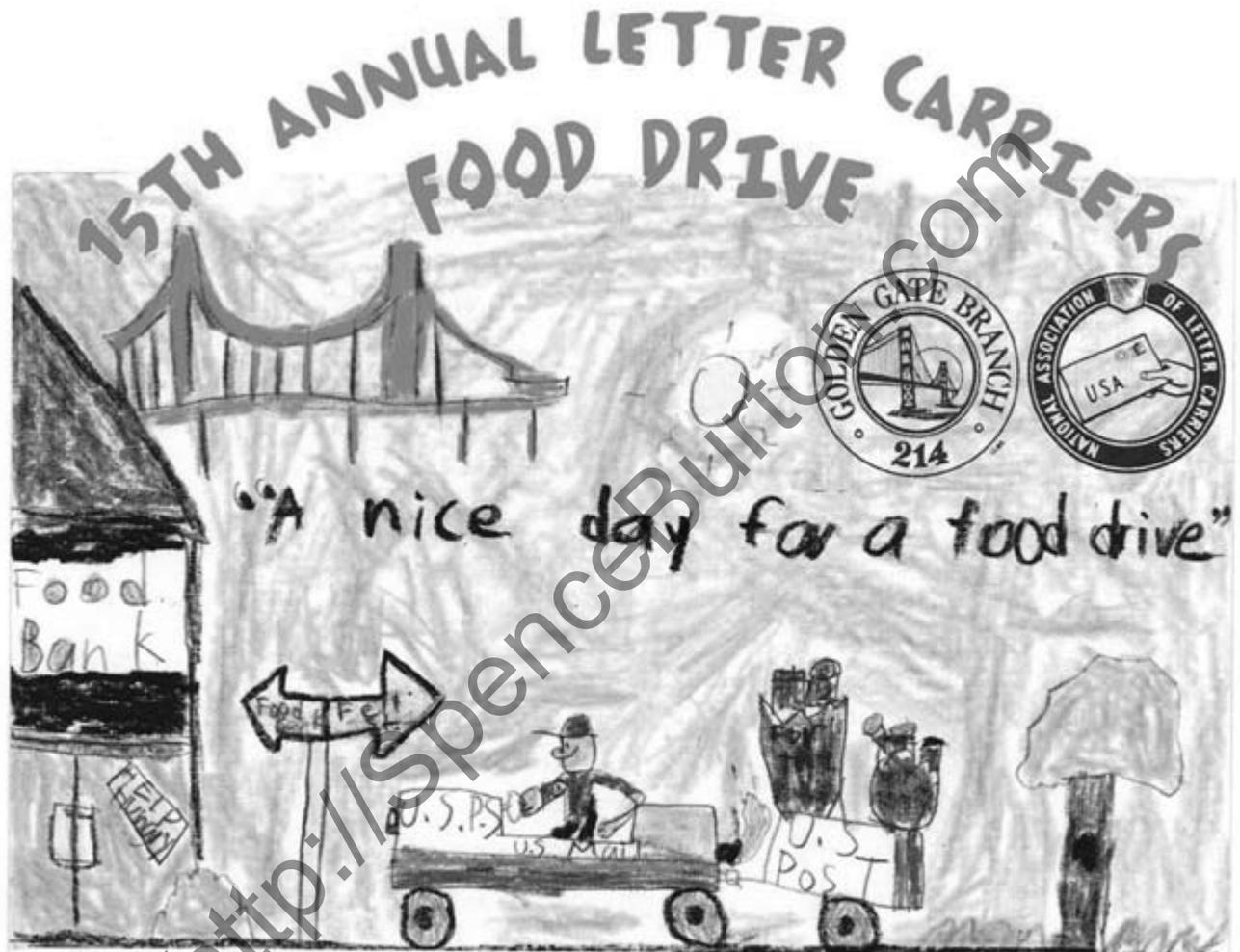


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POSTAL SERVICE.**

By Michael
Pham
age 8

Saturday, May 12, 2007

The winning entry in the Branch 214 Design a T-shirt contest appeared on T-shirts the branch sold to raise additional money for the food drive. Winner Michael Pham's colors were reproduced on the T-shirts. The major lettering is in red, the background is greenish-blue, multiple colors are used, with, of course, a blue postal uniform.

