



The Beast of Burden



Issue 3-10

NALC Branch 290

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Greed is Good

Michael Douglas has turned the words "Greed is Good" from his movie *Wall Street* into a national catch phrase that came to symbolize the excesses of large financial institutions and stockbrokers. As Gordon Gecko, Michael Douglas gives a convincing speech about the merits of Greed.

"The point is, ladies and gentlemen, that greed...for lack of a better word...is good."

"Greed is right."

"Greed works."

"Greed clarifies, cuts through, and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit."

"Greed, in all of its forms...greed for life, for money, for love, knowledge...has marked the upward surge of mankind."

When Oliver Stone's movie "Wall Street" was released, it was meant to be an indictment against the power brokers who ruined companies in the name of greed.

Now, in our present day, the USPS has become a modern version of Gordon Gecko. No business plan is questionable if it improves the bottom line. Business decisions are based on percentages and ignore practicality.



Eliminate Saturday delivery...no problem. Spend \$1.5 Billion on machines that have not proved their worth ... working on it. Pay 25 vice-presidents to sell your propaganda to the media and Congress...done. Buy substandard equipment and give it a non sequitur name like Long Life Vehicle...business as usual.

Gordon Gecko had one thing right in his "Greed is Good" speech. He said at the stockholders meeting, "...this company has 33 different vice-presidents, each earning over 200 thousand dollars a year. Now, I've spent the last two months analyzing what all these guys do, and I still can't figure it out. One thing I do know is that this company lost 110 million dollars last year, and I'll bet that half of that was spent in all the paperwork going back and forth between these vice-presidents."

The same thought has occurred to me about the Postal Service. Why is there so much paperwork and repetition? The plant creates a report so that the supervisor can create a report so that the district can create a report so that the Area can create a reportyou start to wonder where all those reports really go ...and whether we really needed them in the first place.

It is true that the biggest cost in running the postal service is labor. Eliminating the six day work week is an attempt to reduce the workforce. The problem is the USPS is reducing the workforce at the wrong end. Why do we need 25 vice-presidents or a postmaster in every town.

Most of the supervision of employees is done by the workflow supervisors. After that, management becomes redundant.

If the Postal Service doesn't turn itself around, we may soon face ridicule in the public sector for our failures. How does a company with a monopoly on a product fail? Poor management!

Where does the money go? Why does the USPS charge less for certain classes of mail than it costs to process? We don't want to have to answer to a public that begins to ask the hard questions but Gordon Gecko's following comments seem to ring true.

"The new law of evolution in corporate America seems to be survival of the unfittest. Well, in my book you either do it right or you get eliminated."

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I didn't do this article to indulge in fantasy, but in political and economic reality. The USPS has become an endangered species. It's deficit continues to grow and is forecasted to reach nightmare proportions. In the early days of the Post Office, there was accountability to the customer. Men that built up our organization made sure that the customer's wishes were foremost in their decisions because it was the public's money at stake. Nowadays, management has no stake in the company.

"And greed...you mark my words...will not save the USPS"

Thank you very much.

Neal Couey

THE BEAST OF BURDEN EDITOR...Neal Couey

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We invite all members to contribute material for possible publication. All submissions must be signed and delivered by the date of the union meeting of the month for publica-

tion. Union meetings are held on the first Monday of the month. Names will be withheld if requested. Editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted shall be printed for reasons of good taste, legality, or for the good of the branch.

The Beast of Burden is free to members in good standing.

Presidents Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In addition to the non ending pursuit to eliminate Saturday delivery, the Postal Service has announced that it must increase postage in 2011 and blames the reason for this on labor costs.

Before the Postal Rate Commission (PRC) has had a chance to fully study the effects of eliminating Saturday delivery, the USPS has hit the public with a rate increase so that it would generate support for its five day work week plan in lieu of further increases.

The timing of the rate increase is also interesting as the NALC will soon be in negotiations for our next contract.

Once again, any change in the number of delivery days cannot happen without the recommendation of the PRC and legislative action by Congress.

Now, more than ever, you must understand the importance of our legislative efforts in Congress to maintain deliveries six days a week. Without the support of our legislators in Washington D.C., 5 day delivery can and will happen.

As of this writing, there are 217 House members currently signed on as co-sponsors of HR 173 which states "The USPS should take all

appropriate measures to ensure continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service."

The November election can change who supports letter carriers. Our support is needed to keep our friends in office during these difficult times. One way that you can stay informed is to sign up at the NALC website to become an e-activist. Notices of important upcoming events can be sent directly to your email address.

Please make your voice heard by sending a donation or signing up for COL-CPE contributions from paycheck. Active and Retiredwe need your help now!

What is "undertime"? It's a word that I haven't read or seen in any handbook or manual of the Postal Service.

Apparently, when supervisors use DOIS numbers with your fastest casing speed, they come up with "undertime" and project that you can carry that amount of time on another route. But unless you are actually leaving out the door early enough to carry on another route, you should not be required to pivot or carry mail on another route.

We are experiencing an abnormal increase in Article 8 grievances (overtime) because carriers are being forced to work on other routes. When they are being forced to work on other routes, they are not given additional time for travel or being unfamiliar

with the route.

If you are ordered or forced to pivot on another route and your own route is eight hours, you may have a grievance. Follow the instruction and request to see your shop steward. Be sure to fill out a 3996 to document any overtime including your travel time.

Carriers on the OTDL should also fill out a 3996 to document how long the pivot took on the street. The contract calls for a fair days work for a fair days pay. If you leave for the street much earlier than normal, volunteer to help. If you leave at or near your regular leaving time, inform management that you are unable to return in eight hours with a pivot. The USPS has downsized its workforce by 25% in the last eight years. 40,000 jobs were cut in the last year alone. Letter carriers have had their routes adjusted four times in the past eighteen months. We are doing our part.

The JARAP adjustments will be implemented by now and we will be asking you if the adjustment process was done properly.

The date of our annual barbecue is September 26th at Manning Park in Montecito. We hope to see you and your family there.

*Be safe...Be professional
In Solidarity,*

Mike Coyle

\$500 Branch 290 Donald Gullette Scholarship

Awarded to Andrea Ruiz, daughter of Sandra Ruiz

Awarded to Aki Stankoski, son of Robert Stankoski

US Postal Service or US Postal Business?

Confessions of a Former Station Manager

Summer 2010

The year was 1985. We were in Thousand Oaks, California. I was a new training supervisor. We had just come out of a meeting. She said, "But we're not a business! We're a public service! A business picks who they make money from. A public service serves everybody!" She was quite upset. I didn't understand.

The year was 1995. We were in Agoura Hills, California. I was a supervisor. Our boss was visibly distraught. His boss had just given him the verbal dressing down, he turned to me and said, "We are a service. We serve the whole community. We work for everybody. We are not a business!!!"

The year was 2001. It was a Friday. We were in Potomac, Maryland and about to be visited by a man. This man talked about his family and how proud he was to be in the Postal Service. He told us we were not a business; we were a public service. He said he was a public servant and proud to be one at that. He said we need to operate efficiently and thanked us for our participation in the ensuring of that efficiency. The following Monday it was announced that he would become the next Postmaster General of the United States.

The year is 2010. I'm on my route in Simi Valley, California. I deliver to everyone. The people are wonderful, and so are everybody. My peers are strong, worthy, hard working folks from every country in the world, all here as Americans serving our nation in a civil-

ian job. Such unique characters, they are, with big smiles, terribly bad jokes, and beloved by God and Man. One could not create such diversity in a script, though through it's richness, is America's strength. The men and women of the US Postal Service work in the office and go out on the streets to work there too, providing this service to the public every day but Sunday. I am a public servant. I have been since I was 17 years old. I enjoy public service. We chose to serve the public; everyone.

A business can pick and choose. A business exists solely to produce profit. If a business succeeds, the monetary rewards are scattered to the workers on the ground level and piled into the arms of the owners, managers and upper level executives. If a business fails, the business folds and all walk away, shoulders bent over, looking at the ground.

A public service is there for everyone. A public service cannot pick and choose who their customers might be, based on where they live or how much they make. A public service exists to meet the needs of those in a society. A public service cannot fold. It's governed, by a government, who, in all good hopes will ensure it serves well, is efficient, maintained, and worthy of the public's trust. We elect that government to sustain the public service to maintain our infrastructure therefore prevent anarchy.

The US Postal Service is unique because it has an income other than taxes. Do not be fooled. It is not a business. It is clearly a public service. We exist to serve everyone. Look, however, at what's happening? Post Offices are closing and the com-

munities are crying out to keep them. The delivery isn't to the door inasmuch as it's moving to group boxes in one locked container. The organization is being milked as a Cash Cow in ways other services are not tapped for money. Some talk "business" "business" "business" as if the U.S. Postal Service could pick and choose their customers on some income-driven demographic chart. The dollar sign seems to be in mind more than the maintenance of service for this essential communications infrastructure that plays a not-so-small-role in driving both American Society and The Economy.

Yes, yes. I know "But Guy! Faxes, Email, and Text Messaging!" To that, I answer, "The letters from your first boyfriend or girlfriend. The letters found in the attic from Grandpa to Grandma during the big war. The letters in the scrapbook are communications to treasure, not to disappear like text on a screen."

You argue, "But Guy! TV, Radio, Internet Ads!" I say, "Tivo, MP3 Players, Spam blockers and subconscious relaxing multitasking. You know, you turn the catalog page on your lap while watching sports, drinking a cold beverage and all the while enjoying your Recliner. You're doing that more efficiently than clicking the mouse for the internet page and waiting for it to load on your computer."

But but but... "Save the Trees! Dog bites! Global Warming and Al Gore!" Well... "Plant fruit trees in your yard. Walk your dog. 13 Global Ice Ages and Man-Bear-Pig!"

(Continued on page 5)

Computing the FERS Basic Benefit

We've been looking at the Thrift Savings Plan and the role it plays in planning for a comfortable retirement, especially for those under the Federal Employees Retirement System. I wanted to share some final observations.

First, apparently some folks still aren't aware that that FERS has a lifetime retirement benefit in addition to the TSP and Social Security. The FERS basic benefit is computed according to the following formula:

$1\% \times \text{years and months of federal service} \times \text{high-three average salary}$

(The initial percentage is 1.1 percent for those retiring at 62 or later with 20 or more years of service.)

So, for an employee with 35 years of service, the FERS basic benefit would be worth 35 percent of the average of the highest three years of basic pay. An employee under the Civil Service Retirement System would get more than 66 percent of his or her high-three for the same years of service. A FERS employee would have to come up with a little more than 31 percent of his or her high-three from Social Security and the TSP to match the CSRS worker's benefit. That may sound like a lot, but it wouldn't take a \$1 million balance in the TSP to do it -- unless your high-three is \$200,000! (75 participants in the TSP currently have accounts valued at more than \$1 million and 10,000 employees have at least \$500,000)

Some comments on previous articles indicate there are still a lot of hard feelings from FERS employees who feel that those under CSRS will have a better retirement than they do. I'll admit that retirement income is harder to predict under FERS because of the role the TSP plays. But it is entirely possible to have a comfortable retirement based on the FERS basic benefit, the TSP and Social Security. The key is to understand how the retirement system you're in works so you'll be able to achieve your goals.

What You Need, Where You Can Get It

If you need to replace 20 percent of your wages to be able to live comfortably in retirement (in addition to your FERS basic benefit and Social Security), keep in mind that 20 percent your salary is different than 20 percent of someone else's pay. To replace 20 percent of \$100,000, you'd need an investment of about \$500,000. To replace 20 percent of \$50,000, you'd need an investment of about \$250,000. (This assumption is based on withdrawing about 4 percent a year from a diversified set of investments.)

When it comes to Social Security, many people don't seem to understand that the program is a form of social insurance. Everyone pays the same percentage of pay (up to a maximum) into the system, but not everyone gets the same benefit. For employees with a lifetime of average (or below average) wages, Social Security will replace 30 percent to 40 percent of pre-

retirement income. But those with salaries in the \$100,000 range will get a benefit replacing only 25 percent or less of their pre-retirement salary.

Day Traders

Many people blame their low TSP balances on the fact that they can no longer make daily interfund transfers. But studies have shown that trying to time the market actually results in poorer performance than sticking with an asset allocation and occasionally rebalancing your investments between stocks, bonds, and cash. The best idea is to shift from more aggressive investments to more conservative ones as your retirement horizon approaches.

Baylor University finance professor William Reichenstein told Money magazine earlier this year that investors shouldn't vary their allocations by more than 10 percentage points in either direction. In other words, if you generally have 50 percent of your funds in stocks, go as high as 60 percent when they look like a bargain and down to 40 percent when they seem expensive. But don't change your investments on a whim -- only when there are significant changes in market conditions.

Tammy Flanagan is the senior benefits director for the National Institute of Transition Planning Inc., which conducts federal retirement planning workshops and seminars. She has spent 25 years helping federal employees.

US Postal Service or US Postal Business?

(Continued from page 4)

Now that all the arguments have been made, Go outside! Meet real people. Don't let the computer ruin your eyesight. Stop turning so pale. Say hello to the man or woman who delivers your mail.

They work for you. They're part of your community. They're public servants and have chosen to be so, for you.

When you think Postal Service, or talk about the Post Office, remember we're talking about every piece

of mail, in every mailbox, for everyone, every single day, except Sundays and so much more! ... but nothing less.

Be well!
Guy Nohrenberg
Simi Valley, CA

Unemployment Compensation And The National Reassessment Process

June 30, 2010

Source:APWU

Injured employees who undergo the National Reassessment Process (NRP) and are told by the Postal Service either that there is only partial day work available or that there is no work available, should consider filing for unemployment compensation. This temporary financial assistance can serve as an important monetary bridge during the time that an employee is waiting for his or her OWCP compensation to be processed.

This program is formally known as the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employee's Program, and is administered by the states under separate agreements with the U.S. Secretary of Labor. A Postal Service employee's entitlement to this benefit is determined by each state's employment security laws and varies according to the individual state rules and to the employee's wage and separation history.

An injured employee whose work hours have been reduced or eliminated by the NRP should ask the Postal Service to provide them with a SF 8, Notice to Former Employee About Unemployment Insurance. Don't be misled by the phrase "former employee." The SF 8 is also used for current employees who have had

their work hours reduced or eliminated. The complete instructions can be found in Chapter 550, "Unemployment Compensation" in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual*.

Health and Resource Management personnel at Postal Service headquarters have assured us that the SF 8 will be made available to injured employees who receive "Partial Day Work" or "Complete Day No Work" letters. **However, the employee must ask for the form. It will not be provided automatically.**

ask Injured employees who are provided work only on an intermittent basis are issued an SF 8 only for the first time in each calendar year when they are placed in a non-pay status. However, an SF 8 is issued each time to any employee who is, or will be, placed in a non-pay status for seven or more consecutive calendar days.

To facilitate the processing of a claim for unemployment compensation, an employee should take with them the SF 8; the most recent SF 50, Notification of Personnel Action; Social Security card; W-2 form; and a recent paycheck stub showing earnings and leave balance. Additional information can be found at the Web site of the Department of Labor.

OWCP will pay injured employees wage loss compensation even if they are receiving unemployment compensation. OWCP does not consider this situation to be a prohibited dual payment. However, virtually every state's unemployment compensation regulations do consider this to be a dual payment, and would expect to be reimbursed for the unemployment compensation that was paid during the same period of time that a person received OWCP wage loss compensation.

Additional information

From the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 553.12 SF 8, Notice to Former Employee About Unemployment Insurance
SF 8 explains an employee's eligibility for unemployment compensation and describes the steps to be taken in filing a claim. Personnel offices complete SF 8 by entering at top of form the employee's name, Social Security number, and pay location. In item 3 personnel offices enter #732 on the extreme right side and then enter the address of the Eagan ASC:

PAYROLL PROCESS-
ING/UNEMPLOYMENT
USPS EAGAN ASC
2825 LONE OAK PKWY
EAGAN MN 55121-9635

SF 8 is issued promptly to the employee by the separating personnel office so that he or she does not lose unemployment compensation benefits to which he or she may be entitled. An individual whose work or tours of duty are on an intermittent basis is issued an SF 8 only the first time in each calendar year that he or she is placed in a nonpay status. However, a completed SF 8 is issued to an employee each time the employee:

1. Separates from the Postal Service for any reason.
2. Transfers to another federal agency.
3. Is (or will be) placed in a non-pay status for 7 or more consecutive calendar days. SF 8 is issued on the employee's last workday. The date is to be noted in the remarks section of PS Form 50.



Dead Tree Edition: USPS May Split Role of Letter Carrier By Creating "100% Street" Routes

July 9, 2010

The Postal Service believes it can achieve significant savings by having letter carriers spend their entire shift delivering mail while other employees take over the carriers' mail-preparation duties.

The idea is to split the role of letter carrier into two different jobs -- casers who would take on any mail sorting now done by carriers and deliverers who would strictly deliver the mail. Here is what the USPS said about the tactic in a "Flats Strategy" paper it submitted to the Postal Regulatory Commission this week:

"Route Optimization 100 Percent Street routes – (2011 and beyond) — LARGE Opportunity": As total cased volume declines, letter carrier casing will be concentrated on a few assignments, while most carriers will only perform street duties. A "caser" would prepare and pull down all cased mail, while a deliverer would load the mail and deliver it to a greater number of customers. This concentration will produce savings in fixed office time. It is projected that route reductions will result from this initiative. Also, vehicle savings will be generated through street route reductions."

The description raises several questions:

- **How exactly would the approach save money other than requiring fewer vehicles?** Using delivery-point sequencing can certainly save money in the delivery units by giving the carriers more street time. But just divvying up the work differently among casers and deliverers would not change the number of hours required to do the work.
- **When would the casing be done?** Delivery units typically have a small window between arrival of when mail for delivery and the start of the carriers' shift. Something would have to change -- perhaps earlier shipments to the delivery units (which would force changes at mail processing centers and delay delivery of some mail by a day) or later start times for deliverers (which would please neither customers nor employees). Or perhaps the role of caser would be taken on by an army of part-timers rather than people who are currently career letter carriers.

- **Will deliverers on walking routes be able to handle a full shift on the street?**

Many a letter carrier has switched to other jobs in the Postal Service after knees or feet gave out. Some have expressed concern that longer routes (made possible by delivery-point sequencing and route optimization) are putting more wear and tear on the carriers. How would full-time deliverers fare on routes delivered mostly or solely on foot?

The document sheds no light on these questions. It's not even clear whether this tactic and some others discussed in the paper reflect definite plans or just something the Postal Service is pondering.

In fact, the paper has some other interesting, not-completely-explained statements about tactics under consideration, including "the potential of every-other-day sequencing" on Flats Sequencing System machines and elimination of "preferential manual handling of Periodicals mail".

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.....

JANUARY 22, 2011
5PM-12PM



THE GOLETA PHANTOM

I first met the Goleta phantom in the spring of 1994. I cannot believe it has been 16 years since we met and the phantom started writing letters for the Beast of Burden. We reminisced about the old days while we ate lunch at the Hamburger Habit. The phantom asked me how have things changed at the post office since our days of enlightening carriers about the postal absurdities and the style in which supervisors treated employees? We both laughed out loud, realizing the irony of it all. The phantom said, "Hey... wouldn't it be fun if maybe I interviewed you again like in 1994? I said, "Why not, I have time to kill today until we go to Zodos later.

PH: So how have things changed since we last talked in 1996?

JP: Absurdly enough the same problems we had in 1990's are still around today. Only magnified due to Automation and the computer. Automation simplified the letters with DPS, though just like with all things created by management they jumped the gun and expected the savings from DPS immediately. Blocks of mail were out of sequence and you received mail from other routes. Of course, since there was the human element, handwritten letters were often misread by machines and could be sent anywhere.

PH: Wow sounds like a nightmare

JP: You don't know Phantom, the Postal Service wanted to recoup savings right away, while we had to fix the DPS errors and make it work for the good of the Postal Service.

PH: Why the big push to have it work immediately?

JP: Well you see they built these GI-ANT processing plants around the country in order to hold the new automation machines that were half a football field long and cost as much.

PH: You mentioned computers, what was that about?

JP: Well, as good as computers are and have changed the world in so

many ways ... but in regard to the Postal Service, all it did was free up time for the upper management wage-earners. So, they spent all day on the computer requiring information from their line supervisors and station managers. They created programs to micro-manage every moment of the letter carriers day.



PH: Too much, sounds like we can go on for days about that. What about the style of supervisors and the daily routines?

JP: We have Postmaster Ms. No, fondly referred to that because no matter what you ask her, the answer is "NO". We have pseudo labor management meetings with her and she seems all concerned with what we have to say. Then, the minutes for the meeting come out and it reads just how she heard them and definitely not what the stewards had said.

PH: So basically it's her way or the highway?

JP: Yes ...and she has her managers so frightened they won't say a word to her.

PH: How about your station manager these days?

JP: This is even better than before. They actually change on a daily basis. But the one who has logged the most hours at our station is the perfect example of too much time on his hands. He was nicknamed DOOM & GLOOM shortly after arriving.

PH: Why was that?

JP: Well first he walked around with a coffee mug that had to hold a half of gallon of coffee. He would always bark

orders at people... carriers or supervisors. He was always right and if you tried to engage him in a conversation, he would just walk away as if you didn't matter.

PH: Sounds frustrating, how do you guys do it?

JP: Like we always have! No matter what they throw at us we remember our customers and the pride we have in the job we do.

Phantom we can go on for days on this we have so much to catch up on. Let me just throw some things out there for you to think about.

1. We have the VOE survey, stands for voice of the employee. Problem is it has nothing to do with how we feel or our needs.. It is shaped by management to direct the answers where they want them to go.
2. We have taken all the stamp machines out of the lobbies. Excuse given to save money.
3. Even though a carrier walks right by a collection box (and this is one of my favorite LOL) he or she no longer empties it. It takes to long, so they have a carrier at the end of their day drive over and empty it.
4. We have MSP scan points all over our route so they can figure out every minute of our day and where we are wasting time. Yet they stand huddled together in packs throughout the day talking, doing absolutely nothing.
5. They took away our letter racks because they say we do not receive enough letters to warrant them, so now our letters sit on the floor.
6. Phones ring of the hook at the supervisor's desk and no one seems to care to answer them and help the public with their problems.
7. They do not pay employees correctly; you ask for the sick leave you earned, they give you annual leave or lwop. The PTF's never get paid sick leave then they want to give them LOW's for irregular attendance.
8. We have more rules and regulations than one could even begin to remem-

(Continued on page 9)

In Memoriam

KAYSER, David Shearer

Dave past away on June 2, 2010. He was born in Baldwinsville, New York on July 24, 1935 to Joseph C. Kayser and Amelia E. Kayser. He moved to California with his family in 1943. He graduated from North Hollywood High School in 1953 and later served in the U.S. Air Force. In 1958 he married Toni Jacobs in Los Angeles. After attending San Jose State College, he moved to Santa Barbara in 1961. He was a mail carrier in the San Roque area for 30 years. He loved classic cars, classic movies, classical music, jazz, and old radio shows. He loved the ocean and the mountains, especially hiking in Sequoia National Park. He is survived by his wife of 51 years - Toni and three sons: Thomas C. Kayser (Andrea), Eric D. Kayser (Shannon), and Daniel A. Kayser (Janet) and grandchildren Frances and Theo. The family will gather in Sequoia in August for a private memorial service.

HAZARD, Norman Russell

Norm past away on May 16, 2010. Norman Russell Hazard was born on March 28, 1918 in Santa Barbara, California. His parents were Delmar Walter Hazard and Marie Agness Servne. His father Delmar was a well-known fisherman and his mother, Marie, a stay-home mother. The family lived on Chino Street. Norman was one of four children, three brothers and a sister. He is pre-deceased by an older brother Ralph, a fisherman and a younger brother Robert. He is survived by his younger sister Adeline. When Norman was about four, his parents separated. His mother took all the children to Los Angeles, keeping Adeline with her, but putting all three boys in an orphanage in Hollywood. There they stayed until their father took them back to Santa Barbara. Norman went to Wilson elementary school and La Cumbre junior high school, finally graduating from Santa Barbara high school in 1936. After high school, Norman worked as a crew member of private sailboats in San Pedro and Newport Harbor. At age 23, Norman joined the Navy. He was on the USS Pawnee, a 220 foot tugboat used to salvage equipment from sunken ships in the Pearl Harbor attack. He served on the Pawnee as a Navy diver throughout World War II, making numerous dives in dangerous conditions. After the war, Norman moved back to Santa Barbara where he worked as a fisherman on his father's boat. It was during this time that he married Ruby Osterman in 1947, to whom he was happily married for almost fifty years until her death in 1997. Shortly after they were married, Norman went to work for the Post Office, serving as a letter carrier for 35 years.

ARMSTRONG, Eugene (Gene)

Gene past away on June 5, 2010. He was born in Oakland, CA. on June 19, 1931 to Burton Armstrong & Catherine Armstrong. He graduated from Oakland Technical High School in 1949. As a young boy he was his uncle's "bat boy", which started his baseball career. He played "Triple-A" in the minors from 1950 to 1956. He served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Okinawa in The Korean War. He met and married Charlotte and they were married for 49 years. He worked for the U.S. Post Office for 22 years before retiring in 1999. He enjoyed his family & many friends. He loved his sports.

(Continued from page 8)

ber. We have the 25 rules of conduct from district that clearly states all employees, yet does not apply to management. On top of that Ms. NO added her own 15 rules to that when she took over as PM.

PH: Joe it seems like you are all fighting an uphill battle, how is the union holding up?

JP: We are always engaging man-

agement on all fronts, yet they run the office with routes down every day and never have enough help to cover the routes that we do have. It's always hard to get the proper time to prepare our grievances. The older carriers are told to retire, PTF's are tired and burnt out, and injured employees are harassed almost daily. **NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE DO IT'S NEVER ENOUGH.**

PH: Joe, I have to go... say "Hi" to all the fine hardworking carriers at Goleta for me.

JP: Stop by sometime and talk to some of the others. I am sure they would have good information to cause the green tag to fall right off your work shoe

PH: Huh?

JP: Inside joke... take it easy, Phantom!

As always "From the shadows of the Goleta Walls"

Joe Pensabene

EEOC CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT INVOLVING THE NATIONAL REASSESSMENT PROCESS (NRP) AND CLAIMS OF ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION

LAW DEPARTMENT:

EMPLOYMENT & LABOR LAW UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Date: July 1, 2010

To: ALL CURRENT AND FORMER PERMANENT REHABILITATION AND LIMITED DUTY EMPLOYEES OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE (POSTAL SERVICE) WHO WERE SUBJECTED TO THE POSTAL SERVICE'S NATIONAL REASSESSMENT PROGRAM (NRP) BETWEEN MAY 5, 2006, AND THE PRESENT

Re: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC) CLASS ACTION INVOLVING THE NRP AND ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION (*Sandra M. McConnell, et al., v. John E. Potter, Postmaster General, United States Postal Service*, EEOC Case No. 520-2008-00053X; Agency Case No. 4B-140-0062-06)

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

Sandra McConnell, a permanent rehabilitation employee with the Postal Service, claims that the Postal Service's NRP violates the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by discriminating against all current and former Postal Service permanent rehabilitation and limited duty employees on the basis of their disabilities.

On May 30, 2008, an EEOC Administrative Judge (AJ) issued a decision certifying McConnell's complaint as a class action complaint, which allows for McConnell's claim to be decided along with all other current and former Postal Service permanent rehabilitation and limited duty employees who have been subjected to the NRP. The EEOC's Office of Federal Operations affirmed class certification of McConnell's complaint on January 14, 2010. McConnell has been designated as the "agent of the class," and with the assistance of her attorneys, she will represent the interests of the other class members before the EEOC.

CERTIFIED CLASS

You are or were a permanent rehabilitation or limited duty employee of the Postal Service who was subjected to the NRP between May 5, 2006, and the present.

ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE CASE

McConnell raises four claims in her class complaint on behalf of all permanent rehabilitation and limited duty employees: (1) the NRP fails to provide class members with reasonable accommodations; (2) the NRP wrongfully discloses the medical information of class members; (3) the NRP creates a hostile workplace environment for class members; and (4) the NRP has an adverse impact on class members.

This Notice is designed to tell you about McConnell's complaint and how your rights may be affected by this case. You are receiving this notice because Post Office records indicate that you are or were a Postal Service permanent rehabilitation or limited duty employee who was subjected to the NRP between May 5, 2006, and the present. You may be eligible to participate in this case as a class member.

There has been no determination whether the Postal Service has done anything unlawful.

EEOC CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT

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WHAT ARE YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS?

If you meet the criteria to be a potential member of the class, you are not required to do anything at this time in order to remain a part of the class.

If the AJ rules that the Postal Service discriminated against members of the class, you will be notified and given the chance to seek any and all remedies provided by law. **With respect to the claims covered in the class definition, you do not need to do anything now to preserve your right to make a claim later.**

If you are a class member, this case will determine your rights as a class member and any decision issued will have a binding effect upon you.

OPTING OUT

The EEOC does not allow any class member to "opt out" of the class or choose not to be bound by a class complaint decision.

A final decision by the EEOC finding that the Postal Service engaged in discrimination is binding on all members of the class and on the Postal Service. A finding of "no discrimination" is not binding on a class member's individual complaint of discrimination. Although you may not exclude yourself from the class (opt out), you do not have to participate in this class complaint. If the AJ finds that the Postal Service discriminated against the class, you will have to file a claim to receive individual relief. In the event that liability is found, you will receive additional notice on how and when to file such a claim.

SETTLEMENT

If McConnell and the Postal Service wish to settle this case, you will be notified and given the opportunity to review the terms of the settlement, and to object or challenge the settlement.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

The attorneys representing McConnell and the class in this matter have provided a Web site with additional information about this case. A copy of the Administrative Judge's decision certifying the McConnell class action can also be found on this Web site. You can learn more about this case, find answers to frequently asked questions, and provide the class attorneys with information about you at the

Web site: **www.NRPclassaction.com**

Please visit this Web site to find status updates on the case. The attorneys representing McConnell and the class are Michael Lingle, Thomas & Solomon, LLP, 693 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607585-272- 0540; Jeremy Wright and David Weiser, Kator, Parks & Weiser, P.L.L.C., 812 San Antonio St., Ste. 100, Austin, TX 78701; Michael Kator, Kator, Parks & Weiser, P.L.L.C., 1200 18th Street, NW, Ste. 1000, Washington, D.C. 20036. You may contact the attorneys representing the class by visiting the Web site:www.NRPclassaction.com

REPRISAL

Please note that the law prohibits discrimination, retaliation, threats, interference, intimidation, and/or coercion against individuals who participate, testify, assist, and/or are involved in the presentation or processing of this class complaint. Any claim of reprisal must be processed separately from this class action by contacting an EEO Counselor within 45 days of the action complained of.

Health Benefits Report by Don Gullette

10 Ways to Reduce Stress

We all have a variety of stressors in our lives. How we handle or don't handle these stressful situations goes a long way toward defining our quality of life. Here are 10 techniques you can try to minimize stress and become a healthier person. Manage the stress in your life, before it manages you!

Think Positive

Having a positive approach to life can help us meet stresses head-on.

Exercise

Make time in your schedule for regular exercise. Do it with friends who can help you keep your commitment, or do it alone and use the time for reflection.

Take Control

Take control of your life. While you may not be able to change everything, notice the things you can change. Accept the things you can't do anything about, and don't worry about them.

Listen to Your Body

Pay attention to what the voice of your body is telling you. The body speaks to us in many ways: by headaches, stiff necks, high blood pressure, or an upset stomach. When you "hear" these messages, you may be pushing yourself too hard. Slow down. Relax.

Take a Mental Vacation

Sometimes we feel so worn out or frustrated that we reach the "I can't cope" level. That's a good time for a mental vacation. Find a place where you can be alone. Lie down, close your eyes, and visualize a calming place for you. Breathe deeply and slowly. Enjoy relaxing for several minutes. When you are feeling better, open your eyes.

Rest

A well-rested body is more resistant to stress. Do something relaxing before bedtime: a peaceful walk, a warm bath, a warm drink.

Nourish Your Body

A properly nourished body is more resistant to stress. Adopt a consistent practice of healthy eating. Choose foods high in fiber and low in saturated fats and cholesterol. Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products.

See the Humor

Sometimes stress can be reduced if we see the humor in tense situations. Just laughing reduces stress!

Enjoy a Diversion

Learn the art of diverting yourself into something you really enjoy. Go see a movie. Get a hobby and do it often. Take a class. Read a good book. Listen to music. Goof off. Go out with friends. Volunteer.

Use Time Efficiently

Try this strategy to maximize use of your time. Divide all your tasks into three categories. A's are essential to your life goals. B's are important but not essential. C's are trivial, forget about them. Do A's first, and at the time of day when you are most alert and creative. Blast away at your top priorities and let others fall by the wayside.

Mr. William H. Young
 President
 National Association of Letter
 Carriers, AFL-CIO
 100 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, DC 20001-2144

M-01664

NALC# 8266
 Re: Q01N-4Q-C 05022610
 Class Action
 Washington DC 20260-4100

Dear Mr. Young:

Recently, our representatives met at the Interpretive Step to discuss the above-referenced grievance.

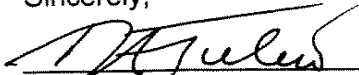
After reviewing this matter, the parties agree to resolve this dispute based on the following:

The Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) is a management tool for estimating a carrier's daily workload. The use of DOIS does not change the letter carrier's reporting requirements outlined in section 131.4 of Handbook M-41, the supervisor's scheduling responsibilities outlined in section 122 of Handbook M-39, or the letter carrier's and supervisor's responsibilities contained in Section 28 of Handbook M-41. DOIS projections are not the sole determinant of a carriers leaving or return time, or daily workload. As such, the projections cannot be used as the sole basis for corrective action. A five minute time credit for lines 8-13 will be added or when route inspection data is available for lines 8-13 the actual average information will be used for daily workload projections.

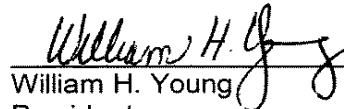
Management is responsible for accurately recording volume and other data in DOIS. Other than obvious data entry errors, route based information may only be changed through a full-count and inspection or minor route adjustment. Additionally, the parties have previously agreed that functions in DOIS which relate to the route inspection and adjustment process must be in compliance with the city letter carrier route adjustment process in Subchapter 141 and Chapter 2 of the M-39 Handbook. Exceptions are offices that have jointly established an alternate route adjustment method. DOIS base information in such offices shall, as appropriate, comply with the alternate route adjustment method.

Please sign and return the enclosed copy of this decision as acknowledgment of your agreement to settle this grievance.

Sincerely,



Doug Tulino
 Vice-President
 Labor Relations
 U.S. Postal Service



William H. Young
 President
 National Association of
 Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

Date: 7-30-07

The terms of this settlement became effective September 11, 2007 with ratification of the 2006-2011 National Agreement.

"It's the things you learn after you know it all that counts! Late Coach John Wooden to Bill Walton

“What about Bernstock?” ...and other tough questions for Postal Execs

July 5, 2010

The U.S. Postal Service's failure to address some inconvenient questions will hurt its chances of winning approval for several controversial measures including its announced rate increase.

My questions begin with **"What about the Bernstock fiasco?"**

Why was a top executive allowed to run amok, and what are you doing to prevent this kind of problem from recurring?

Bad news keeps dribbling out about Robert F. Bernstock, the former president of mailing and shipping services, in what must seem like Chinese water torture for the folks at L'Enfant Plaza. (Which is why public relations experts say that if

you've got bad news, release it all at once on your own terms rather than having the news media drag it out of you bit by bit.)

First there were the no-bid contracts to Bernstock's cronies, then the use of his Postal Service staff to conduct private business, and most recently the revelation that top postal officials looked the other way as Bernstock broke the rules.

In a pickle

Noting Bernstock's checkered history, Brian Sheehan at postalnews blog recently questioned why the Postal Service even hired him in the first place. (Answer: The Postal Service was in a pickle, so why not hire a guy who used to run a pickle company?)

Even the worst-case scenario is that the money Bernstock wasted would not cover one day of the Postal Service's losses (or its interest-free loans to the federal government that are euphemistically called prepaid retiree health benefits). But the incident certainly doesn't inspire confidence in Postal Service management.

There's a limit to what postal executives can say without running the risk of slandering Bernstock or violating his privacy. They did at least overhaul their contracting rules recently.

But they need to go further to put the incident behind them. They should openly discuss the mistakes they made, reiterate that no one in the organization is exempt from rules or oversight, and reveal whether the USPS got its money's worth from the no-bid contracts.

Is FSS a boondoggle? Tough Question #2 for the USPS

July 6, 2010

A couple of years ago, postal officials were telling catalog and magazine publishers that the Flats Sequencing System would dramatically lower the Postal Service's costs of handling our mail.

Now it's not so clear whether the \$1.4 billion investment in Phase I of the huge FSS machines will even pay off. And that's a major annoyance to magazine publishers, who were singled out today for an extra-special exigent rate increase because the Postal Service can't get its costs of handling flat mail under control.

I'll admit that it's a bit unfair to use the word "boondoggle" in reference to FSS because that word implies that there was no logic to the investment other than as a giveaway to the contractor, Northrop Grumman. But the Postal Service is playing into the hands of the nay-sayers and

conspiracy theorists by not being more forthcoming about its struggles with the FSS machines.

I think the people who developed and approved the plan for automating the handling of flat mail honestly thought FSS would pay for itself in the form of reducing sorting and operating costs. Unlike some other Postal Service initiatives, there was competitive bidding and a careful planning process that responded to input from mailers and suppliers.

But the plan, which was based on steady or growing flats volume, first started to go off the track when flat mail began declining rapidly (after double-digit postage increases for catalogs and magazines that scared both industries into change-the-business-model meetings with a "less print, more Web" mantra).

And it's been 10 months since the USPS's Office of Inspector General

said no more machines should be deployed until the system met the minimum performance standards of the Northrop Grumman contract. The Postal Service responded by accelerating deployments and not officially revealing the results of further testing, though word keeps leaking out of problems with the machines.

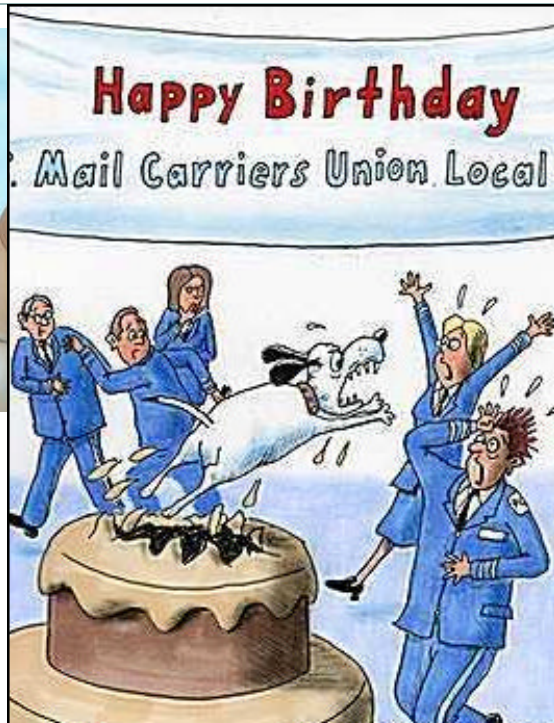
The OIG released another study today stating "we identified several FSS machines [in northern Virginia] that were unavailable for several months and processing issues that negatively impacted delivery operations."

Even to those who are supportive of the FSS concept, it's starting to look as if postal officials so fell in love with the FSS plan and schedule that they couldn't dream of pulling the plug on the 100 Phase I machines or going back to the drawing board. The machines do seem to be saving money,

(Continued on page 15)

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Giovanni & Natalia Campanella
 Announce the birth of their son,
 Giovanni Noah Campanella
 Born June 5, 2010
 10:41 AM 9.2 lbs 21 in



(Continued from page 14)

especially in delivery operations, but are the savings enough to justify the huge capital investment?

No Phase 2?

One of the flood of documents the USPS submitted today with its rate proposal includes a statement that "the Postal Service intends to evaluate the feasibility of enhancing excess AFSM [Automated Flats Sorting Machine] 100 equipment to sequence additional flat mail not covered by the initial 100 Flats Sequencing System machines."

Maybe that's an ingenious approach to using equipment that's been freed up by the FSS machines and the drop in flats mail volumes. It certainly sounds less costly than buying new FSS machines.

But the skeptic's view is that postal executives are not seeing a favorable return on investment from the big capital outlay and therefore are eyeing "Plan B" (no more expensive new machines) instead of FSS Phase 2. And with the Postal Service not revealing whether the FSS machines are performing to standard, it's easy to be skeptical.

So as catalog and magazine publishers hear about the Postal Service's allegedly skyrocketing costs for handling flats mail -- despite our greater use of co-mail and dropshipping and the USPS's FSS investment -- don't be surprised if we start using the "B" word.

Dead Tree Edition

....Insights, analysis, practical advice, and smart-aleck comments related to the production and distribution of publications, such as magazines and catalogs, in the United States.



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Laird Atkins