



Brain surgery and the hot air pump

We open our story with beautifully textured veneer decking the walls of the Oktoberfest Post Office swing room in Oktoberfest, New York. Sitting across from each other with their morning coffee are Carrier Supervisor Nick O'Dimass and NALC Shop Steward Nora Snowflake.

Nora: I gotta admit it, Nick. You really surpassed yourself with that stand-up presentation on the necessity of a five-day delivery week this morning.

Nick: Thanks, Nora. That's a rare compliment coming from you. You're one carrier who understands the relationship of the five-day week with the survivability of the Post Office.

Nora: No doubt about it. So, what private mailing firm have you arranged for a future gig for yourself? I mean, I've got too much respect for your intelligence as a person to think that there is some other motive.

Nick: I don't have any plans for another job. Once we go to five-day delivery, the stability of the Postal Service will be secure and I won't have to worry anymore about being laid off.

Nora: Come on, Nick. You're too smart to not understand that to get to five-day delivery, Congress would have to pass a law eliminating the requirement for guaranteeing America the same level of service it's enjoyed for more than 100 years.

Nick: I really didn't think of that, but, now that you mention it, the district manager wouldn't have asked us managers to do that stand-up talk if he hadn't already figured that out. I'm sure the Postal Service has a pretty good plan in place to accomplish that; otherwise, they wouldn't have asked us to do the talk.

Nora: Maybe you're right. It shouldn't be any problem convincing representatives and senators to pass a bill that would accomplish that, despite the fact that they'd be getting extreme flak from voters, postal patrons and businesses that want to get their mail six days a week.

Nick: Listen, once they understand that the Postal Service is in deep caca financially, that bill would pass with no problem.

Nora: Yeah, despite the fact that Postal Service Office of Inspector General recently showed that the Office of

Personnel Management overestimated, by \$75 billion, the Service's obligations to the Civil Service Retirement Fund. You think that amount might turn the Postal Service deficit into a surplus, or don't you trust the OIG?

Nick: Of course I do, but you don't think the postmaster general would be lobbying for five-day delivery if that were true, do you?

Nora: Well, let's just say that the OIG knows what it's talking about. What other motive would the PMG have for promulgating a reduction in delivery concept?

Nick: Money. We go to five-day delivery and we can eliminate all T-6 positions. All carriers would have a fixed schedule of five days a week and we'd reduce the cost of wages and benefits for one-sixth of the present carrier workforce. Besides, the PMG understands how overworked we managers are and, with that change, we'd only have to work five days with the same pay.

Nora: So what day do you think they'd eliminate?

Nick: I don't make that call, but if I did, I'd eliminate Thursdays, since that's the lightest delivery mail volume for this office.

Nora: So, carriers would be working a fixed schedule of Monday through Wednesday, and Friday and Saturday.

Nick: That's the way I see it.

Nora: So, you think postal patrons won't still demand to get parcels and other mail delivered to them on Thursdays?

Nick: Of course they would, but they'd just have to get some other delivery service to do that.

Nora: Now you're talking about changing the law to modify the Private Express Statutes. You know what happens when you do that for Thursdays?

Nick: What?

Nora: You show you can do it and you send a message to Congress that every time the Postal Service cries financial wolf, they can eliminate another delivery day to take care of the problem. See where that's going?

Nick: I guess....

Nora: Ever considered a vocation in brain surgery? I can see you've really thought this through and you're not one to be sold a hot air balloon without first seeing if it'll float. Now, about that other gig.... ☒