



BROTHERS AND SISTERS, GATHER 'ROUND, SO I MIGHT TELL YOU THE STORY OF HOW WE ARRIVED AT THIS NIGHTMARISH PLACE.



WE MUST BE QUIET AS THE GRAVE, FOR YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS LISTENING.

THAT WAS BACK, BACK BEFORE THE...

IT WASN'T ALWAYS LIKE THIS. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THERE WERE GOOD SALARIES AND BENEFITS, PROTECTIONS FROM BRUTAL MANAGEMENT, EXCELLENT SERVICE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS, AND HOPE FOR AN EVEN BRIGHTER FUTURE.

POSTAL APOCALYPSE

LOOK AROUND YOU. WHAT DO YOU SEE? DECAY AND DESPAIR.

WHEN YOU GO TO DELIVER THE MAIL, YOUR PATRONS SHRIEK IN HORROR, FOR LOOK AT YOU, OVERWORKED AND FRAZZLED. YOU LOOK LIKE A ZOMBIE. YOUR UNIFORM AND LLV ARE FALLING APART, WHAT WITH THE POSTAL SERVICE NOT HAVING THE FUNDS TO REPAIR EITHER. WITH ALL OF THE SAFETY HAZARDS, IT'S AMAZING YOU DON'T LOOK WORSE.



YOUR PATRONS DON'T REMEMBER WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE, AS IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE THEY LAST SAW YOU. WHEN THEY DO SEE YOU, DELIVERING TO THE CLUSTERBOXES AT THE END OF STREETS, THEY ASK WHERE THEIR PACKAGES ARE, WHERE THEIR MEDICINE IS, WHERE THEIR PAYROLL IS, AND YOU CAN ONLY SHRUG. HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT MAIL HAS TO GO TO ONE OF SIX PROCESSING PLANTS, ALL OF THEM OUTSOURCED TO INDIA? BUT YOU DON'T GET MANY QUESTIONS, AS PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO GO THEIR CLUSTERBOX, WHICH OFTEN ARE IN UNSAFE OR UNLIT AREAS.



FOR MANY OF YOU, YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE YOUR PATRONS, EITHER, AS YOU'VE NEVER DELIVERED TO THEM BEFORE. WITH TURNOVER SO RAMPANT IN THE LETTER CARRIER RANKS BECAUSE OF LOW PAY, NO BENEFITS AND HARASSMENT BY MANAGEMENT GOONS, THERE SEEM TO BE NEW CARRIERS COMING AND GOING WHO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE DOING. AND HOW MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN COWED BY MANAGEMENT TO ACCEPT THESE AWFUL CONDITIONS, OR WORSE, WILL REPORT MY WORDS AFTER WE DEPART? IF I DON'T MAKE IT OR THEY GET ME, REMEMBER ME AND REMEMBER MY WORDS.

IT WAS NOT ALWAYS LIKE THIS. THIS USED TO BE A GOOD JOB FOR MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICANS. THE NATION'S VETERANS USED TO FIND SOLID JOBS HERE AFTER SERVING OUR

COUNTRY. BUT WITH SO MANY CUTS IN WORKFORCE AND PAY, ONLY THOSE WHO CAN LIVE ON NEXT TO NOTHING CAN SURVIVE. THE ONES WHO ARE HERE HAVE TO WORK SECOND JOBS OR GO ON WELFARE TO MAKE ENDS MEET.



AND THEN THERE'S THE COMPETITION. ONCE THEY GOT ACCESS TO THE MAILBOXES, THE DELIVERY WARS BEGAN, FIGHTING FOR DELIVERIES AND SABOTAGING EACH OTHER. SLIGHTS TURNED INTO ARGUMENTS, WHICH TURNED INTO FISTFIGHTS, WHICH LED TO THE FORMATION OF GANGS. THAT ONLY ESCALATED WHEN THE BUZZING DRONES BEGAN TO DARKEN OUR SKIES.

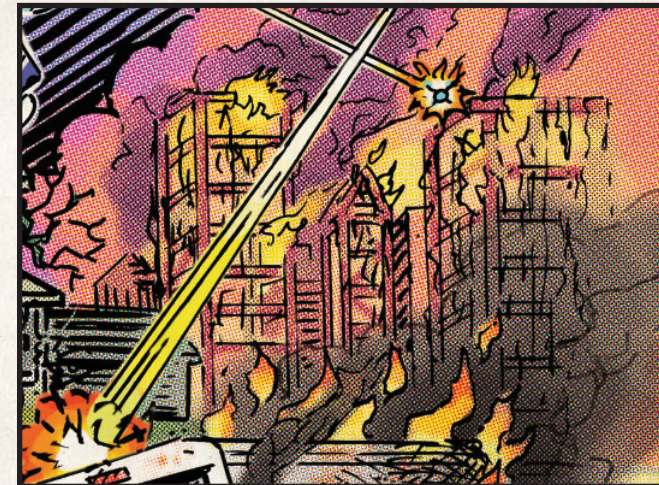


IT USED TO BE JUST UPS AND FEDEX. NOW THERE ARE DELIVERY COMPANIES FOR EVERY BIG BOX RETAILER, LIKE WALMART, IN ADDITION TO LOW-COST DELIVERY COMPANIES THAT ARE OUT TO MAKE A FAST BUCK, EVEN THOUGH THEY DELIVER MAIL TO THE RIGHT ADDRESSES ONLY HALF THE TIME. ARE CUSTOMERS SURPRISED ANYMORE WHEN ONE OF THE CARRIERS THROWS AWAY THEIR MAIL, BECAUSE THE JOB IS NOT WORTH THE HASSLE AND ALL PRIDE IS LOST?

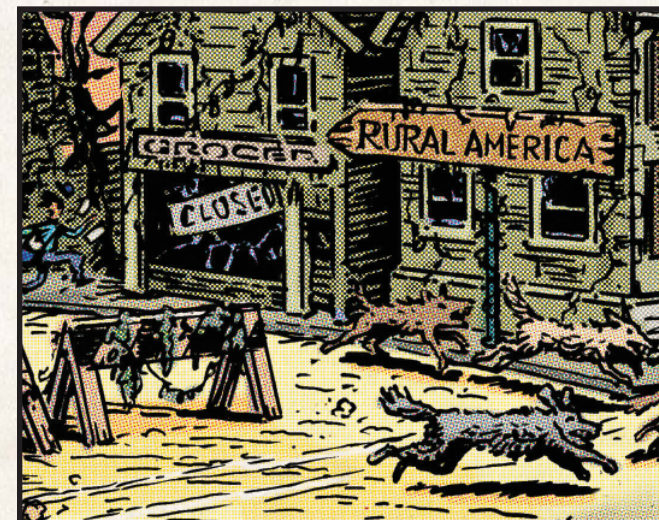


IT'S JUST NOT SAFE FOR A CARRIER OUT THERE. AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT. WE DON'T HAVE A CONTRACT ANYMORE. NO GUARANTEED PROTECTIONS. NO ONE TO TURN TO IF MANAGEMENT VIOLATES OUR RIGHTS. WE'RE ON OUR OWN.

THERE USED TO BE A TIME WHEN CARRIERS WERE SEEN AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY. BACK WHEN WE COLLECTED FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY, BACK WHEN WE WORKED ON PROGRAMS THAT WOULD HELP DISTRIBUTE MEDICINE IN CASE OF A BIOLOGICAL ATTACK, BACK WHEN WE COULD HELP SOMEONE INJURED OR IN NEED ON OUR ROUTES. NO MORE. WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO DEVIATE FROM OUR ASSIGNED CHORES TO DO ANY OF THOSE, NOR ARE WE IN THE COMMUNITIES ENOUGH TO GET INVOLVED.



AND FORGET RURAL AMERICA. WITH MAIL SO SLOW NOW AND THE COMPETITION DECIDING IT'S NOT WORTH DELIVERING TO THEM, THEY'VE BEEN CUT OFF. I'VE HEARD WHISPERS OF THE HORRORS OUT THERE IN THE RURAL LANDS, BUT I DARE NOT SPEAK THEM.



IT ALL FELL APART SO FAST.

I REMEMBER HOW IT STARTED. SUDDENLY, IN THE DARK OF NIGHT, THE POWERFUL ENTITIES WHO HOPED TO PROFIT FROM THE DECAY OF THE POSTAL SERVICE, ALONG WITH THE MISGUIDED IDEOLOGUES OPPOSED TO THE VERY CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SERVICE, STRUCK. THE POLITICIANS IN

WASHINGTON WHO DIDN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES, MUCH LESS HOW TO SOLVE THEM, ACTED ON THESE DARK-EST INSTRUCTIONS AND VOTED FOR ALL OF THE MISGUIDED IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO "REFORM" THE POSTAL SERVICE. BEFORE WE KNEW IT, THESE IDEAS WERE WRITTEN INTO UNBREAKABLE LAW.

A BILL SWEEPED THROUGH THE SENATE THAT GAVE POSTAL MANAGEMENT THE AUTHORITY TO NOT ONLY CUT SATURDAY DELIVERY, BUT TO CUT AS MANY DAYS AS IT WANTED, WHENEVER IT WANTED. BEFORE IT PASSED, A RESOLUTION TO FORCE THE POSTAL SERVICE INTO BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDINGS WAS TACKLED ON. THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED ITS OWN BILL, ELIMINATING DOOR-TO-DOOR DELIVERY AND CREATING A NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD THAT COULD REWRITE THE EMPLOYEES' UNION CONTRACTS HOWEVER IT WANTED. THE FINAL BILL COMBINED ALL OF THESE DEADLY NOTIONS INTO A CANNONBALL AIMED AT THE POSTAL SERVICE'S FOUNDATION.

OF COURSE, THEY DIDN'T MAKE THE EASY CHANGE AND FIX PRE-FUNDING. WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT? ALL OF THAT MONEY MADE THE FEDERAL DEFICIT LOOK SMALLER. SO, THE PRE-FUNDING ACCOUNT GOT LARGER AND LARGER AS THE POSTAL SERVICE GOT SMALLER AND SMALLER. EVENTUALLY, IT WAS MORE THAN THE POSTAL SERVICE WOULD EVER NEED FOR RETIREE HEALTH CARE BENEFITS, SO CONGRESS PASSED ANOTHER LAW FUNNELING THAT MONEY OFF TO PAY FOR THEIR PET PROJECTS.

MEANWHILE, POSTAL MANAGEMENT TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO CUT SATURDAY SERVICE. BUSINESSES STARTED PULLING THEIR MAIL OUT, WORRIED THAT PEOPLE WOULDN'T GET THEIR NOTICES IN TIME. MAIL VOLUME, AND REVENUE, FELL. PRIVATE DELIVERY COMPANIES CONVINCED CONGRESS TO CHANGE THE LAW TO GIVE THEM ACCESS TO THE MAILBOXES. NOT THAT THERE WERE MANY MAILBOXES LEFT; THEY WERE REPLACED ALMOST UNIVERSALLY WITH CLUSTERBOXES. USPS LOST MORE VOLUME TO THE COMPETITION, WHO CHERRY-PICKED THE MOST LUCRATIVE HIGH-INCOME, URBAN DELIVERIES.

AND SO POSTAL MANAGEMENT NEEDED TO FIND MORE AREAS FOR CUTTING. PROCESSING PLANTS—OUTSOURCED ABROAD. TUESDAY MAIL DELIVERY—ELIMINATED. POST OFFICES IN SMALL TOWNS—BOARDED UP OR SOLD OFF. THURSDAY MAIL DELIVERY—GONE. THE CUTS JUST KEPT ON COMING.

BUT IT WASN'T JUST THE NETWORK AND THE SERVICES. THEY ALSO TOOK AIM AT THEIR WORKFORCE. WITH THE AUTHORITY TO STRIP WORKERS' CONTRACTS, THEY LAID OFF LARGE SWATHS OF THE MOST SENIOR CARRIERS, CLERKS, MAIL HANDLERS. THE STEWARDS WERE THE FIRST TO GO. ANYONE WHO SPOKE UP WAS NEXT. THEY BROUGHT IN WALMART CONSULTANTS TO SHOW HOW THEY COULD SLASH PAY AND MEDICAL BENEFITS, PUTTING WORKERS ON WELFARE AND MAKING THE STATES PICK UP THE TAB FOR HEALTH CARE COSTS.

AND NOW HERE WE ARE, THE SURVIVORS. HUDDLED LIKE RATS, WE CAN ONLY THINK OF WHAT WAS. AND NOW WE MUST RETURN TO OUR ROUTES, THOSE WHO REMAIN.

TELL THE STORY TO OTHERS. IT WASN'T ALWAYS LIKE THIS. THIS DIDN'T HAVE TO BE.



POSTAL APOCALYPSE



Of course, none of that has happened. Not yet.

What we've shown you is a nightmare scenario, viewed through the lens of a science-fiction, post-apocalypse horror story like those popular in comic books, movies, books and television today. But like the best science fiction, its seeds come from real fears and possible dangers.

As recently as the last Congress, there were bills calling not just for eliminating Saturday, but also for giving postal management the authority to cut as many delivery days as it would like. Other legislation called for the end of door-to-door delivery. As the current Congress was beginning, some in senior leadership positions called for USPS to go through bankruptcy to alter the union-management collectively bargained contracts.

These threats are very real.

Fortunately, NALC has several tools to help us battle against these nightmarish proposals; two of the most vital ones are COLCPE and the e-Activist Network.

"In every election, letter carriers have plenty at risk," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Each election cycle brings with it worries about the kinds of legislation our elected representatives on Capitol Hill might introduce that could affect the customers we serve six—and sometimes seven—days a week.

"Of course, our jobs, our pay and our benefits always are at risk, no matter who's in charge on the Hill or in the White House," the president said. "NALC members should well understand by now that it's for all of these reasons that we as a union get so deeply engaged in political campaigns and in legislative battles. We know that everything we've worked for over the years could easily be wiped away with the stroke of a pen, because we've seen it happen."

Federal law forbids the use of union members' dues money for political purposes, so ever since the mid-1970s, NALC has made use of a political action fund known as COLCPE—the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education—to solicit voluntary contributions from active and retired members to advance our cause on Capitol Hill.

"The money that's collected for COLCPE goes to support candidates for public office who are on the record in support of letter carriers," Rolando said. "It's an important conduit that allows all members to get involved in the political process."

COLCPE (pronounced COLE-sepp) supports in two ways candidates who support letter carriers.

With direct support, COLCPE helps such candidates fund their campaigns, helping them pay for costs of staff, advertisements, phone banks, literature and mailings. Printing and postage to reach voters costs money, but getting the word out to voters is even more expensive in the age of television and Internet advertising.

The average House district has more than 650,000 constituents. A Senate candidate in a large state may have tens of millions of voters to reach. No candidate can talk to all of the voters in person. To compete, candidates must spend money on mailings, phone banks and advertising to get their message to the voters.

"As letter carriers, we want to give the biggest microphone to those candidates who support carrier issues," President Rolando said.

The second way COLCPE helps is by supporting the release of letter carriers to work for AFL-CIO efforts to get out the vote for pro-labor candidates.

Released carriers primarily do direct voter outreach—contacting targeted voters by making phone calls and knocking

on doors—to talk about what is at stake in an upcoming election.

"Letter carriers are natural campaigners," Rolando said. "We know better than anyone how to go door-to-door, we're not shy about talking to people and we have a lot of respect in the community. Voters listen."

You don't have to be released to help a campaign, Rolando added. "Contributing to COLCPE is the easiest and most important way to support the candidates who will stand up for us," he said.

But the job isn't done once the election is over. No matter who is in control of Congress or the White House, the union must stay engaged with the power brokers in Washington, to watch for and defend against bad legislation, and to help promote meaningful postal reform. That's where you come in again, by becoming part of the e-Activist Network.

Open only to NALC members, the e-mail-based e-Activist Network allows messages from the union's headquarters in Washington to reach your inbox in an instant, giving you the latest news from Capitol Hill and letting you know how you can take immediate action, if necessary.

"It's on all of us to make sure congressional representatives know they work for the good of the American public," Rolando said. "We must stay vigilant and remind them to maintain and improve the nation's postal network for the good of everyone."

In this annual COLCPE issue of *The Postal Record*, we recognize the generosity of letter carriers who give a little extra to protect the jobs and way of life of all carriers. These supporters, both active and retired, donate to COLCPE in three ways.

Most choose the easiest way to provide steady support by signing up for a small

deduction from their postal paycheck each pay period, such as \$5 under the "Gimme 5" program. For less per day than the cost of a cup of coffee, a letter carrier can help ensure that COLCPE has a reliable source of funds to help guard his or her pay, benefits, collective-bargaining rights and job. These regular donors provide the bedrock financial support for COLCPE by ensuring a steady source of funds it can count on.

In addition to automatic payroll deduction, active or retired letter carriers can easily arrange for automatic deductions from a bank account, and retired members can contribute directly from their OPM annuities.

Carriers who made donations through automatic deductions in 2014 are recognized beginning on the next page of this issue.

Some carriers choose to send one-time donations by simply writing a check. Donors who made one-time donations in 2014 are recognized beginning on page 80.

Letter carriers also give to COLCPE through group donations by participating in fundraising events held by branches, auxiliaries and state associations. Group donations in 2014 are shown on page 86.

"You insure your car, your home, your health," Rolando said, "so try to think of COLCPE as job insurance." For just a few dollars per pay period, he said, you can join the fight to protect your job and your benefits against the near-constant attacks against them.

For information on how to support COLCPE, call the NALC Government Affairs Department at 202-393-4695. Information on COLCPE and signing up for the e-Activist Network can be found at nalc.org.

Only by all of us working together can we hope to avoid a real postal apocalypse. **PR**