



Making it right

We can make it right by just getting involved! I'm starting to feel like the person on television pointing his finger at the camera, trying to make you think that my message is just for you. In a way, it is—all 200,000 of us.

The ink hadn't dried on my last article when the Postal Service fired several more rounds at Congress as to why the USPS has to go to five-day delivery. Every TV and radio talk show was buzzing about how to cut the cost of mail delivery. You know, I am always amazed at how smart some people are who call in to those shows.

Last week, I was trapped at the airport for several hours and every channel was doing a talk-back live on how to save the Post Office. For the most part, you could guess

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people's backgrounds by their remarks. The so-called high-techie wanted to close the Postal Service, sell off all its assets and use the cash to pay down the national debt. To him, the Postal Service had outlived its usefulness and the government could use some of the money left over to give every person Internet access.

The next caller said she got her mail at a post office mailbox and sees no need for door-to-door service. She recommended we put post office boxes in every coffee shop. You guessed it—take all the money the Post Office saves and give it to the taxpayers. After all, it's their money.

This kind of pulling answers out of thin air went on for hours. To tell you the truth, it was enough to make me sick. It reminded me of the old saying, “I've got mine; pull up the rope!” Just when you didn't think it could get any worse, it did.

The next caller claimed to be a letter carrier. He had been with the Post Office for three years and claimed postal employees were being treated as second-class citizens by having to work on Saturdays. He went on complaining that because of six-day delivery, he was missing quality time with his family. He said because of his age, he would have to be almost 45 years old before earning enough seniority to get Saturdays off. The caller then stated his children would be out of middle school. When I heard that, I started looking for my medication. I still just cannot believe a letter carrier could be that short-sighted.

Nevertheless, his words made me think back to when my children were in grade school and I was carrying mail. My day, like that of my other union brothers and sisters, went like this: We punched in around 7 in the morning and, on most days, we were off in eight hours. Now that sounds great, right? Well, back in the 1970s, eight-hour days would not put food on the table or pay the rent.

After work, all the union stewards spent an hour or two on grievances, then we all headed off to our part-time jobs. From driving trucks to doing janitor work or night security, we had to feed our families and provide them with a few of the nicer things in life, like a second car.

I know a lot of letter carriers who put in almost 40 hours at their part-time jobs just to make ends meet. Boy, how times have changed. As letter carriers, we can be proud of the job we do for America. Let's not forget that the benefits we have today were achieved off the backs of our union brothers and sisters who walked before us.

The downfall of the Postal Service, followed by our great union, starts when you put the word “I” before the NALC. How long has it been since you've attended your branch meeting? Well, friend, that's too long! ☒