



Parallel dimension

In the comfort of the state-of-the-art swing room of the Show Me Post Office in Tiger, Missouri, two career letter carriers, Alan DeCardes and Carrie Okie, discuss life in the Postal Service before beaming on the clock to start work.

Alan: You know, Carrie, it seems like only yesterday that there was all that hullabaloo about the Postal Service going to five-day delivery.

Carrie: Yeah, I know, it doesn't seem like 10 years ago. I was even in favor of the idea. The idea of having Saturday and Sunday off seemed pretty good.

Alan: Me too. In retrospect, I'm glad the NALC lobbied Congress and put a stop to the idea. I mean, look where the "Company" is today.

Carrie: Yep, Congress working out the pre-funding retiree health benefit issue and eliminating the postal deficit was major for a healthy postal future.

Alan: Then the NALC and management working out more mutually beneficial solutions to the operational problems and coming up with innovative ways to generate revenue has re-established the USPS as the most productive and self-sufficient Postal Service in the world.

Carrie: Right. I think BIMAP or PSYCHMAP or MIARAP was what got us started down that road. Imagine working with management on everything proactively and not relying on the computers to generate daily solutions to workload.

Alan: It's hard to believe that the same managers we had so many problems with back then turned out to be not so bad when you got them into legitimate discussions about workload without their dumb "handhelds."

Carrie: Without that change in the work environment, I don't believe we would have ever come up with current revenue-generating ideas, using the Internet as our friend and not seeing it as the specter of demise.

Alan: Yeah, pickup and delivery from groceries, department stores, auto repairs, restaurants, spas—you name it. Although the First Class mail volume didn't come back, we jump-started the Post Office from those other revenue sources.

Carrie: I shudder to think what could have happened if

the NALC leadership had listened to those of us who liked the idea of Saturday off and not done what was right to save the Post Office.

Alan: You know it.

In a parallel universe, casual letter carriers Alan DeCardes and Carrier Okie discuss their outlook for their day's work for the Postal Department in Tiger, Missouri, over the brown bag breakfast that Alan prepared.

Carrie: What's it look like, Alan?

Alan: I think it's going to be a money-maker today. I should be able to get in five or six hours.

Carrie: Yeah, if you're right, that should help out. Working three days a week, though, is making it tight.

Alan: Remember the old days when we were full-time regulars with a guaranteed 40 hours a week, with a good retirement plan and a great health plan?

Carrie: Yep. I still remember that literature that the Postal Service sent us about cutting back Saturday delivery. Boy, that sounded *sooo* good. We were going to get weekends off and save the Post Office.

Alan: You're not the Lone Ranger. A lot of us bought it, hook, line and sinker.

Carrie: So we get Saturdays off, then two years later, we get Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday off. Then we don't need a regular workforce and then we got Big Brown or Big Mauve delivering what used to be our stuff on those days.

Alan: Yeah and they're using the Internet to improve on their revenues and, without the postal monopoly, that can even deliver the mail we used to have even on the days we do work.

Carrie: I blame this whole thing on the postmaster general for selling us a bill of goods.

Alan: Just remember: They were selling, but nobody forced us to buy.

Carrie: Man, but it sounded so good.

Alan: Well it's just a good thing that I can work at my brother-in-law's gas station to make ends meet.

Carrie: Why didn't we listen to our union leaders? Why?

Alan: Well, you won't have to worry about not doing that anymore. ☒