

# I am a victim of circumstances



**Manuel L. Peralta Jr.**

**I** was walking my route in a hurry to finish, turned near the planter, dropped the mail in the box, turned again and there he was, smiling. Not a tooth was missing and he wasn't saying hello. Crap. I know he lives there. He knows I come by, he barks and I go away every day, but why wasn't I prepared for today? Am I a victim of circumstances?

I knew I should have mentioned the dog to my supervisor. I knew that I should have written it up so that we had a record, and I knew that I should have had my satchel and dog spray. It's just that I have too much to do, and I didn't want to take the time. I knew that if I did

not report the hazard, someone might get hurt, but I did not figure that this someone would be me.

Every week, we are supposed to receive a safety

up your rights and don't let management take away your right to work in a safe work environment. Your managers will seek to have you ignore all of the safety rules that have been created over the years. Some of them will look the other way in hopes that you will take less time to do your job. They will, however, pounce on you if something happens. They will be admonished from above and, in turn, they will take action against you and most notably, they will claim that they were not aware of what you were doing. They will protect themselves at your expense. Don't let them put you there. Our safety rules are there to protect you from harm. Taking the time is a very important element in contributing to better working conditions. Remember: If I don't do so, who will?

## Embracing our future union leaders

**When I walked through the doors at the Post Office in 1979** to begin my career, I recall that the first few letter carriers I met were union brothers and sisters who welcomed me, guided me and taught me how to carry mail. Those first few months were made easier knowing that these new acquaintances had quickly become my extended family.

During the last few months, as a result of the Interest Arbitration Award setting the terms of the 2011 National Agreement, we have seen a change in the workforce structure.

Beginning in January 1992, the transitional workforce was created by an arbitrator as part of the terms of the 1990 National Agreement. The transitional workforce was designed as a temporary classification of employee whose purpose was limited to the deployment of DPS (in the 1990s) and FSS in recent years. That temporary need had come to a conclusion.

Arbitrator Das' award created a new classification of employee, called city carrier assistant (CCA). Our CCAs are not temporary. They are our future. Always make time to welcome them into our union family. Open a seat at the table for them to participate, to learn and to get involved. They will be running this union in the future. Your input, your guidance and your friendship will be appreciated by them and you will be investing in the survival of your union.

Keep an eye on each other and help our new employees.

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stand-up sharing information to guide us on better and safer decision-making, and frequently we don't listen. The subject matter might be a repeat and I don't want to hear it again, or the stand-up talk is given in such a way that I am bored and do not want to hear it. I turn away, keep casing my letters and tune it out. I'm safe and I get it, so I thought.

Section 811.24 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* provides that:

The safety philosophy of the Postal Service is the following:

d. All employees must be trained in proper work procedures and must be educated to work safely and to understand that they are responsible for doing so. Management is responsible for the adequate safety training and education of employees. However, all employees are responsible for working safely, and in doing so, they benefit not only their organization but also themselves.

If we do not embrace the above, who will? Don't give

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