



*May merienda ba? Postman Jim Laico says hello to Lia Juarez, new owner of Mailboxes Etc. which is part of his route.*

## WALANG SANWITS DITO

by Lia Silva

I FOUND MYSELF OUT ON THE STREET BY THE FIRST quarter of this year after being part of the IT industry for almost ten years. It was disheartening, especially when the offers started to subside, so I decided it was time to take a different avenue. I had six months to think about what I wanted to do "when I grew up" and I realized I was tired of the corporate politics, and maybe I had an ounce of Lola Luz' business sense, so I went into business. Alex and I recently took over a small franchise called Mail Boxes Etc.(MBE)--a postal and business service center. Alex, however, has kept his day job.

In my research I found that this was a good fit for my skills and experience--it was either this or making sandwiches. Subway is the No.1 franchise in the food service industry; this is No.1 in non-food. The interesting part is that we ended up purchasing a location in Pittsburg, CA right next to the subdivision that was formerly "Laicoville." I've been having a great time with this business although I haven't seen real dollars yet. Hopefully some of Lola Luz's genes are in my bloodstream and I can be as successful as her. By the way, we try to LL be anthrax-free!

## GOING POSTAL

by Jovim Laico

"Mailman...where's my CHECK?!"

"You'll be delivering to our home later anyway, so can I have my mail now?"

"Heyyy. Buuddyyy. Pal."

"Give me my f\$%&\*()^%\$n' mail!"

"WOOF WOOF! BOW WOW WOW!!"

"Did you bring me some money?"

"Aaaaaaay...gimme a hug, man..." (from someone who happily just made parole)

Just to name a few common quotes from walking the streets of the diverse demographics of Pittsburg, CA.

Being a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service may seem an easy task. All it seems is to be able to walk up to a box and slam dunk pieces of paper then leave. Looks easy, but there is more to it than that (You can ask Tita Malu, too).

Our training teacher was from the US Marines and acted like it. On the first day, he even lined up the late people in front of the class and questioned their tardiness! Believe me, this is one boring classroom I never dozed off in! He was stern, mean, and straight to the point, "Class, by just the look of you, I know who's gonna make it, and who's not! By the end of your training, only a fourth of this class will make it."

Nowadays, driving those boxy, ugly postal vans is easy. During training, snaking it forward and BACKWARDS through a line of cones was a new and cone-squishing experience.

Reporting for duty: My first day could sum up my life experience at the post office. With over 60 employees working in one big room, you meet a whole lot of characters--that includes the supervisors. In our office, it seems these people--supervisors--came straight out of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." They usually don't act human! (Ask Tita Malu.) I felt like they had a phone pole shoved up their you-know-what!

"You got to move faster than that!"

"You should've gone to the bathroom before you clocked-in!"

"You walk like a grandma!"

"When walking, make sure there's a 3 foot space between your feet!"

"No, we can't give you time off!"

"THAT IS A DIRECT ORDER!"

Or, they'll give that silent, stare-you-down look when you try to reason with them.

Two years passed, and I've learned to deal with my superiors, thanks to advice I got from my fellow carriers. I developed the "in one ear and out the other" method, the "Just say YES, NO PROBLEM," the direct number to the UNION office, and the "whatever" method among other things.

When I get out to the streets, it's great! I get paid to exercise! Bosses normally just stay indoors! On good days, I have 2 hour lunches. I get gifts for Christmas. I meet a cast of characters. Etc.

When I get out to the streets, sometimes it's not great. Heavy rain. Blistering sun. Heavy mail. Dog attacks (5 major but no hits). Too tired to

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**Rejected package**



**Akala'y bomba, bagoong pala -- A bomb? No, it's bagoong!**

GOING POSTAL

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exercise. Bosses do come out and check on you once in a great while. First of the month ambush (checks from welfare, SSI, unemployment, disability, etc). Twelve hour days. Anthrax scares. Etc.

Being a mailman benefits me now and much later. The beginning was really tough for me! But now, I get paid to exercise which is good for a diabetic like me. Sick leave hours accumulate rapidly for those postally needed stress leaves. Vacation hours pile up just as fast. Uniforms and stuff are free! Most of all, retirement will be SWEET!

Oh, yeah, lastly we don't get free stamps! (BUMMER!)

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## NAKAGAT NG TAO, PAKAKAGAT SA ASO

by Malu Laico

I went postal (*nasiraan ng ulo*). I remember receiving a flyer in the mail one day that said the US Postal Service was hiring Temporary Casual Carriers -- meaning people to deliver letters for the upcoming holiday season. I thought, why not, seems like an easy job and easy money, right? Have fun reading my story and you tell me if it's a fun job.

Their requirement was a 5 year DMV driving record and to fill out the application form at the Concord Post Office. So very early that Monday morning, I applied for my DMV driving record, which took an hour and a half in line and just 10 minutes for them to process. They asked me if I wanted a 3-year record or a 10-year record. Of course I had to ask if there was a price difference and they said no. So I got the 10-year driving record and proceeded next door to the Post Office. I had to fill out the forms they gave me, and for me that was the very first time I've ever experienced filling out so many job application forms. It's like signing your life away! Usually it's like 1-2 forms only, but I filled out like 6 pages. Then they tell you that you'll receive a call from them. Yeah, right! Like they'd really call.

### WORKING FOR THE FEDS

I got their call . . . oh my gosh . . . I could not believe what I was hearing over the phone. I was so excited! I got myself a job working for the Federal Government. I got an assignment in San Ramon, CA after another interview. And on another day, I went to the Main Post Office in Oakland for more forms to be filled out and some finger printing to be done. They scheduled us for a drug test and a physical examination. I started orientation on the 22nd of October. That was a whole day affair but that was all right because you get paid to attend. That was held in another Oakland Post Office. I'd never been to so many post

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**Mele Kalikimaka!** From left: Gumby, Joel, Kathleen, Marnie, Nini, Dan, and Rick Elizaga (with Hawaiian friends) celebrate the successful completion of yet another issue of Laico Lines at the Old Lahaina Luau in Maui.