



Rejected package



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

GOING POSTAL

continued from page 21

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

(continued on page 23)



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.

NAKAGAT NG TAO, PAKAKAGAT SA ASO
continued from page 22

offices in my life. And to my surprise, the next day we were to report for Career Training in the San Ramon Post Office.

Here goes my Training Story: Our training was scheduled for only 3 days. But this Postmaster in San Ramon was just so happy to have 5 temporary trainees in his office. So it actually lasted for one whole week. The first day was all lectures about getting ready to be bitten by dogs. He kept stressing that dogs are very territorial inside the house and we should learn how to cover our neck and head when dogs attack. Then he talked about someone who might point a gun at you and take the van and all the mail--just give him the van and whatever else he asks of you including your jewelry. He also mentioned bomb threats, and that all the mail should be considered as suspicious mail. All day long I was asking myself, "What the heck am I doing, listening to this guy and scaring the heck out of myself?" But again I kept telling myself, it's just a temporary job, to keep me busy, and a new experience ... I can make it. By the way, that first morning we had coffee and donuts and they really gave so much attention to us. On my second day, they showed us around the post office and showed us how the mail was sorted out by the machine and manually. They showed us the vans and how they were loaded, and all the exciting things that the letter carriers do from the time they report to work. That day we could not wait to do hands-on training. This time no more donuts were being served. No more coffee. After lunch, which was for 30 minutes, the Postmaster said it was time for us to all experience how to deliver the mail. So, we thought we would get to drive the vans. Wow! How exciting!

YOUR MAIL'S READY – GET IT YOURSELF !

Yeah sure, enough of excitement and thrills! The Postmaster loaded all the mail and boxes into his pick-up truck and asked us to ride the other official car, a service car of the US Post Office; he dropped us all in one area and showed us how to carry the satchel (bag) and all the letters, fliers, magazines and what-have-you mail with one hand and use the other hand to get it all into the mail slots. Can you imagine, I was carrying on my shoulder this super heavily loaded satchel with tons of magazines, my hand holding a bunch of mail, wearing a USPS (United States Postal Service) cap on my head, sweating like crazy at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, temperature 88 degrees, and wearing a long sleeved shirt because who would have thought we would have an Indian Summer that day. I walked the whole block to get rid of all that mail as fast as I could. And when I finally did, here came the Postmaster telling me to get the other batch of mail from the back of the truck and to deliver it all to the respective addresses. Oh my gosh! I'd thought I was all done! I just felt like sitting down on the pavement and throwing all that mail or just shouting in the middle of the street, "Hey, you guys, your mail is ready, come and get it!" That whole load of mail was good for one person's deliveries for the day. But the Postmaster divided it between 5 people, and we finished delivering it in 3 1/2 hours. I delivered mail that day for 3 blocks and those were

not one street after another. It felt like one block after the other. When I got home that day, I had the best sleep ever. Good thing I had a lot of leftover food for dinner that night. I could not imagine preparing dinner after all that hard work. Oh, I forgot, there were like 5 houses with such fierce dogs, barking like they were ready to kill you.

On our third day, all of us were sharing stories and experiences and every one of us did agree on having such a good night's sleep. Just as we thought, the Postmaster told us we had to deliver mail again after lunch, that way we would get to feel how it is to be "good letter carriers." Actually, there was this one route, of one of the permanent employees, who was either sick or on vacation, that needed to be delivered. But instead of paying overtime to the other letter carriers, why not use the trainees, right? So that was what we were there for. I thought to myself, here goes another day with the dogs and the heavy satchel and the heavy magazines to be delivered to these houses and all they'll do is junk it down the garbage. I could not believe that to one of the houses I had to deliver 5 different kinds of magazines. Those were so heavy and that house didn't have just a regular mailbox, they had a basket that served as a mailbox hanging on their door. This day, I started asking myself, is this the kind of life I wanted for the next 6 months?

GIVE ME THE LAICO LIFE

We were back in the lecture room and the Postmaster started talking about being on time, coming to work whether you were sick or not, having no vacations and telling your friends and family not to bother you while you were in training for the next few months. THAT WAS IT! That really did it for me. No vacation, no late nights, no life. Ha! Excuse me! Then I started thinking of Jovim, who works for the Post Office as a Career Carrier (a permanent letter carrier). I thought he must not be a full-blooded Laico to be able to work at the Post Office. My gosh, it's all work and no play. I am a full-blooded Laico and I don't think I could work that hard without calling in sick or having a 30 minute lunch break.

I quit as soon as they finished the training because I was feeling so guilty. They started to take pictures for IDs and started to make schedules for our routes and for our days off. And I told myself, why should I give them a hard time and go through the driver's training with the right hand drive van when I would not even go through with this job for the next few days. I was told I probably joined just to be able to share this story with Laico Lines. Well, this is my story and it sure was an experience. My hat's off to Jovim! And please, to those of you with dogs, please keep them leashed or away from your front doors, especially during the time mail is being delivered. Your mail may not be delivered to your house or even to the your whole block. Believe me, that's part of the training.

As for me, it's back to dentistry and patients who bite. *Kakagatin pa ako ng aso, tao na lang.* (I'd rather have humans, instead of those dogs, biting me.)

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