

## Your Postal Podcast 41st Edition Transcript – October 2011

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**Richard Watkins:** Welcome to Your Postal Podcast. This is Richard Watkins of the Postal Service's Corporate Communications Office. In this month's edition we'll go to a Post Office in California that some say is haunted by a former employee. We'll also hear some opinions about who should be the first living person to be honored on a U.S. postage stamp.

### Haunted Post Office Segment

**Watkins:** For centuries, ghosts have been rumored to haunt houses and graveyards, but a Post Office? Ted Snyder is here with a story sure to elicit goosebumps.

**Ted Snyder:** I'm here in the basement of the grand old 1930s-era San Pedro, California, Post Office. For several years, custodian Ed Nelson looked after the labyrinth of stairs and hallways that make up this building. Although he no longer works here, employees still see him from time to time – and that would be fine, if it weren't for the fact he passed away 28 years ago.

The facility's General Clerk and historian, Brian Bundy, says that all San Pedro employees know about Mr. Nelson, and some think he's still coming to work. Bundy himself has had some creepy close encounters.

**Brian Bundy:** One day I was working on the second floor and I always wear my keys on a ring clipped to my belt, and as I was working I felt a tug at my side right where my keys are and I thought, well that's odd because there's no one around me, and as I looked down all of my keys were scattered and the key ring instead of being round was laid out perfectly straight.

**Snyder:** And that wasn't Bundy's only visit from Mr. Nelson.

**Bundy:** I had just clocked out from work and I was going down to the basement to my locker to put some paperwork away, and as I'm walking down the hallway I'm looking at the paperwork and suddenly I see two shoes and a pair of legs, a person standing there. I thought that's really odd because it's closing time and everybody was about gone and as I looked up to see the face and body, it evaporated right in front of me. I just ran to my locker, got my stuff and hightailed it out of there. When I went upstairs, before I said anything, they said, "Wow, you're just so white. It looks like you've seen a ghost." I said, "I think I have" (laughs).

**Snyder:** Maintenance employee Kathy Reyes had an even more unsettling experience.

**Kathy Reyes:** When I first started in the maintenance craft my job was to turn off all the lights. I was the last one in the building and I had to clock up and set the alarm, and the lights kept going back on in the basement. I would go back and I would turn them off, and I thought well maybe I missed one you know because I'm new to this job and maybe I missed a few switches, and they'd go back on as soon as I would hit the stairs to come back up. So then I asked the supervisor, "Is anybody else in the building?" And he said, "No, come on let's get out of here. We're going to lock up." It kept happening, and I

thought well maybe it's an automatic light. Well then, that's when I first had my introduction about Mr. Nelson. So then after that I said, "Okay, if he wants the lights on he can leave the lights on."

**Snyder:** Although Mr. Nelson's activity may be unnerving to those who've experienced it, his haunting has never been malevolent, or even mischievous. And that comes as no surprise to Business Mail Acceptance Clerk Rosie Rivera. She worked with Ed Nelson.

**Rosie Rivera:** I loved Mr. Nelson. He was a wonderful person. He went out of his way to help people all the time.

**Snyder:** According to Rivera, Nelson never missed a day — at least until he passed away in 1983. Perhaps he's keeping his perfect attendance record intact. After his death, Nelson had a surprise for three of his co-workers. They discovered that he had left them substantial amounts of money. One of those recipients was Rosie Rivera.

**Rivera:** I was a single parent, and I think that's why he did it because he knew how I was struggling.

**Snyder:** Another employee who remembers Mr. Nelson is Long Beach Postmaster Ken Snavelly, who began his career as a Part-Time Flexible carrier in San Pedro.

**Ken Snavelly:** As a new employee we had to rotate in and work Sundays periodically to deliver special delivery mail and do collections, and I will always remember when I came in the only other person working on Sunday was the custodian, Mr. Nelson. And I always remembered he was either mopping in the hallway or mopping on the workroom floor. Well you go ahead years later, a custodian that was working there who had to work the late shift reported seeing a ghost down in the basement. And I dismissed it. But when he began to describe the image he saw. What he was describing was exactly how I remembered Mr. Nelson mopping the floor; it was the same motion and the same look. And I thought back, Mr. Nelson was very attached to that building and took care of it. Who knows, it looked like maybe he wanted to continue taking care of it as a ghost.

**Snyder:** From the basement of the San Pedro Post Office, this is Ted Snyder — who'd like to get out of here very quickly — for *Your Postal Podcast*.

### **First Living Person on Stamp Segment**

**Watkins:** In September, the Postal Service announced that next year -- for the first time -- a living person will be featured on a U.S. postage stamp. The question is, who will it be? Peter Hass hit the street for some suggestions on who should get the Postal Service's stamp of approval.

**Peter Hass:** Under the old rules, a person had to have passed away at least five years earlier before they could be depicted on a stamp. In announcing the rule change, Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe said it would allow the Postal Service to pay tribute to individuals for their achievements while they are still alive to enjoy the honor. There's also the hope that the change will boost interest in stamp collecting. After all, a stamp that's never used is one on which the Postal Service makes nearly 100 percent profit.

Media and the internet buzzed with suggestions after the announcement. Names that have seemed to come up over and over included singer/songwriter Bob Dylan, Microsoft Founder Bill Gates, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg, and even pop chart topper Lady Gaga.

I took to the streets to find out if Phoenix-area residents might have some other ideas -- and many did:

**Customer 1:** I think one of the living icons that should be on the stamps is Oprah Winfrey, because I think she's definitely a living icon and has had a lot of impact on the world in a positive way.

**Customer 2:** I'd say one of the two remaining Beatles, for obvious reasons...

**Customer 3:** Someone who's living that I would like to see on a stamp is someone who is a celebrity that's had other outside their sphere accomplishments as far as humanitarian aid like Brad Pitt or Sandra Bullock, or Donna Karan; I know she does a lot of philanthropic work, as well.

**Hass:** With the five-year limit removed, many I talked to focused on Apple CEO Steve Jobs rather than any living person, as a result of his passing in October.

**Customer 4:** I think Steve Jobs would be fantastic. I mean, no one here ever, like, buys commemorative stuff, but if you put Steve Jobs on a postage stamp, it would shoot through revenue like crazy.

**Hass:** One very-much-alive financial advisor and syndicated radio host even got a vote:

**Customer 5:** I'm a big Dave Ramsey fan...I think we should put him on a stamp.... I want everyone to be debt-free!

**Hass:** The Postal Service is still taking customers' suggestions for the first living person to be on a stamp at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](http://facebook.com/USPSStamps), and on Twitter. For more information, visit [beyondtheperf.com](http://beyondtheperf.com) or [usps.com](http://usps.com).

### **News Roundup**

**Watkins:** And now, here's our monthly roundup of recent news about the U.S. Postal Service. On October 18th, the Postal Service announced that beginning early next year, it will cost a penny more to mail letters to any location in the United States, the first price change for First-Class Mail stamps in more than two and a half years. The new 45-cent price for Forever stamps is among the price changes filed with the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Prices also will change for other mailing services, including Standard Mail, Periodicals, Package Services and Extra Services. The announcement does not affect Express Mail and Priority Mail prices.

"The overall average price increase is small and is needed to help address our current financial crisis," said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe. "We continue to take actions within our control to increase revenue in other ways and to aggressively cut costs. To

return to sound financial footing we urgently need enactment of comprehensive, long-term legislation to provide the Postal Service with a more flexible business model.”

More information on the new pricing is available at [usps.com](http://usps.com).

Forget the talk that electronic messages will spell the end of traditional mail. Now there's a new revenue stream for the Postal Service — and it's being generated online.

Recently, when Apple introduced the latest incarnation of the iPhone, the company also announced a new product that lets iPhone and iPod Touch users send personalized hard-copy mail directly to friends and family.

The “Cards” app allows users to create personalized greeting cards with their own text and photos and have them delivered by First-Class Mail to any address in the world.

Users can choose from 21 different letterpress designs covering six different subjects: Birthdays, holidays, births, travel, thank-you notes and love letters. The cards are printed on cotton paper and tucked in an envelope with a unique picture permit sticker by Apple's third-party printer. The sticker displays a heart-shaped image and is printed in two different colors — yellow for domestic postage and blue for international.

Thanks for listening to Your Postal Podcast, a production of USPS Western Area Corporate Communications. And special thanks to Ted Snyder for his help with this month's edition. Copyright 2011, All Rights Reserved.

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