

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

Two weeks ago, I spoke of the frustration of shopping and some of the customer antics that I witnessed over the years. I am sure that the situations that I described were not much different than what some of you listeners have experienced at one time or another. While working at the post office, I also had had a few experiences with irate customers. A couple and their young son came in one day and demanded that I pay their medical bill. They had been in the lobby the night before and father got his finger caught in the stamp machine coin return while looking for loose coins. He tried to yank it out and broke it. Needless to say, I did not pay the bill. An irate fellow arrived in my office one day waving a piece of mail and demanding Forty Thousand dollars. The letter in question was a third class advertisement that offered a drawing with the top prize of Forty Thousand dollars and had been delivered to him 'after' the date of the drawing, causing him to lose a chance of winning the grand prize and he wanted the post office to pay up. Sorry! When I was station superintendent at Henderson Center, the customer windows were open from 8 until 5. One of the neighborhood kids, about ten years old, was an avid stamp collector. He would always show up about five minutes before closing and want to look at all the new stamps that we had in stock. We tried to convince him to come in earlier in the day but to no avail. More than once we had to delay the interstation truck because of a late close out. He was never mistreated in any way by our crew although we would have enjoyed turning him over our knee. Then you have the customer who is leaving town that morning and wants his or her mail pulled from delivery so they can come down and pick it up right away. Some of the welfare recipients were the worst in those days. One of the women thought she had an inside track because her sister happened to be a personal friend of mine. When I refused to cooperate, I was called a few choice names. I received a call from a welfare recipient one morning asking to pull her mail and hold for pickup because she had to catch a plane to Reno, more choice names. At another time, my boss directed me to investigate an outlying small post office that was located in a general store. The store operator had the contract for postal services and when someone did not pay their bill on time, she would withhold their social security checks until the bill was paid. That was short lived as we pulled the contract. When I hear that phrase "The customer is always right", I cringe a little.

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