

POST GUILD forum



Local 32035 The Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild

December 3, 2004

Post Ethics?



Bonnie Silva

Bonnie Silva is a Telephone Sales Rep in Classified Advertising. She has worked continuously at the Post since February 17, 1967, when at nineteen years old, she was hired in Classified Advertising. During her 37 years at the Post she worked hard, raised her family, and fully expected to be able to retire from the Post someday in dignity and at the time of her choosing.

But Post management is bent on forcing her out now. For 36 years, the Post has been satisfied with Bonnie's work. Her many years of good evaluations prove this. They are peppered with the phrases "commendable", "work habits are...appreciated", "you contribute unique skills", "you always go that extra step for our transient customers", "your patience, your knowledge, your willingness to help our customers is very much appreciated".

Now in her 37th year, the Post has changed its statistical standards for telephone sales reps in classified. All year long Bonnie has worked to meet these standards for productivity, revenue per call, revenue per hour, lines per hour, ACD per hour, etc. She has improved her scores. But not enough to suit management. She has been given written warnings, been suspended for three days without pay, and now suspended for five days without pay.

Post management should learn a little bit from its own Code of Conduct. In its Introduction, Don Graham cites the Company's "strong principles guiding the way we ...treat each other" and "we recognize how we greatly benefit from long-term employees..."

Is it ethical to treat Bonnie Silva, one of the longest term Post employees, who has no blemishes whatsoever in her record except those related to her current difficulty in meeting new performance standards, the way the Post is treating her?

At Bonnie's grievance meeting on November 22nd, when a Guild representative calmly described the Post's suspension of and treatment of Bonnie as "unethical", the Post management representatives cut short the meeting and stormed out. --Rick Ehrmann

Health Insurance Update

The Post increased hospital charges for 2005 in an effort to reduce costly visits to the Emergency Room. As an alternative, it offered better coverage for those who choose to go to an urgent care center for all those "emergency" visits that are not true emergencies. The Guild agreed with the goal, but requested a list of acute care clinics in the area that would be available nights and weekends. We've just gotten the list and there is not a single clinic in DC. All told, the Post found 11 clinics in Maryland and Virginia that have some evening or weekend hours. We will continue to press the company and Aetna to provide more options for employees who are doing their best to control costs but can't always schedule their health emergencies during bankers' hours. We'll continue to keep you updated on insurance news and are always interested in feedback. Let us know how things are working — or not — and what you would like to have us negotiate for on your behalf. --Ceci Connolly