

Your Postal Podcast 26th Edition Transcript

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Richard Watkins: Welcome to Your Postal Podcast.

This is Richard Watkins with Postal Service's Office of Corporate Communications. In this edition, you'll hear about how one man from the state of Maryland gets tens of thousands of people to share their deepest, darkest secrets – all through the U.S. Mail. And, you'll hear from letter carriers who know how to cope when the summer heat is on.

(Post Secret Segment)

Watkins: Frank Warren's website, Post Secret, has received more than 350 million hits, and it's all because of a unique idea that uses the mail. David Rupert is here with the details.

David Rupert: Frank Warren is the inventive wonder behind Post Secret, a phenomenal movement that allows people to tell their deepest secrets through a simple postcard.

To say it's been a success is an understatement. His website, PostSecret.com, has had more than 350 million hits. His five books have been bestsellers.

And since his project began five years ago, he's received more than 500,000 postcards at his home.

Frank Warren: I've always been fascinated with postcards. They are not only beautiful, but also allow us to communicate in very meaningful and unusual ways with others and with ourselves.

Rupert: Warren has earned the trust of strangers from around the world, to open up and share their untold confessions.

Warren: What I wasn't prepared for was how the project has resonated with people around the world. It's a very human part of who we are. That desire to want to share our whole selves with others. Probably in most cases it's difficult to do that without being judged. Without feeling social pressure.

Rupert: So why does he insist on a postcard?

Warren: People try to e-mail me secrets all the time. But I really prefer them on postcards, and I think it allows more of a person's inner self to be shared than just what the text would.

Rupert: The postcards are often very personal in nature, sharing long-harbored regrets, wrong doings, and desires.

Warren: I think of the postcards sometimes that I receive in my mailbox as little windows right into people's souls.

There is something very meaningful and symbolic about finding a secret within yourself, discovering the words, take ownership of that secret and then expressing that physically on a postcard, bringing it out of yourself, almost exorcising that secret, and then once you've got it in your hand, physically letting it go to a stranger.

Rupert: Some of the best postcards he get gets, he shares with the world. In fact, more than 1 million people a day visit his web site.

Warren: I probably get 100-200 postcards every day. It's like a brick of postcards. My mail carrier wraps them up in a rubber band, like ribbons around a gift.

Rupert: And there's one he that makes him laugh. It was written on a converted Starbucks cup that was converted into a postcard, stamped, and mailed.

The secret written on the cup said "I serve decaf to customers who are rude to me."

Rupert: There's one confession in particular that haunts Warren.

Warren: One that came on a postcard that had an image of the twin towers, the World Trade Center in New York City. And the secret said "everyone who knew me before 9/11 believe I'm dead."

Rupert: So, Mr. Frank Warren, what's your secret?

Warren: I have one of my secrets, one of my Post secrets, in every book. I sneak it in anonymously like Alfred Hitchcock in his films.

Rupert: He tips his hat to postal employees everywhere

Warren: I get very kind messages sometimes on postcards expressing thanks and gratitude to the mail carriers who are handling these special messages in such a respectful way.

(Coping with the Heat Segment)

Watkins: The last few months have brought near crippling heat waves to many parts of the country. But in one state, scorching summers are a given every year. Peter Hass found out how letters carriers prepare for their daily rounds in the extreme temperatures.

Peter Hass: Year-round Arizonans -- who aren't "snowbirds," who abandon the central and southern portions of the state when temperatures climb -- know that they'll have to survive triple-digit heat when they go outdoors every summer.

(Sound of carriers getting ice for their water jugs from the station's ice machine.)

Hass: For Arizona letter carriers, working outside or driving an LLV (Long Life Vehicle) without air conditioning brings its own set of challenges. Many Post Offices have ice machines churning out cubes of ice for carriers to fill up their water jugs as they leave for their routes.

Among those is Craig Smith, a city carrier at Tucson's Fort Lowell Station, who said there are several ways to prepare for the heat.

Craig Smith: I just try to dress comfortably, obviously. I don't like my clothes restricting. You know, just let the breeze flow through and roll the windows down -- and then stay hydrated. Definitely stay hydrated all day long.

Hass: Smith noted he's lucky enough to have several restaurants and convenience stores along his route that let him refill his jug with ice and water throughout the day.

Rural Carrier Stephanie Wright has delivered mail for nine years in Tucson and knows how to protect herself, inside and out.

Stephanie Wright: Lots of sunscreen at a really high SPF, and lots of water. I drink a lot of water -- I drink two liters of water for the three hours that I'm out delivering. And then you have to stop and utilize restrooms along the way, of course. But yeah, a lot of water -- it's all you can do.

It's always a big deal because it can affect you and you'll not even notice -- especially when you're busy working, you're sweating a lot. It's harder to deal with because at least in the winter and the cold, you can bundle up. In the heat, there's nothing you can do; we don't have air conditioners. We have a hot air being blown on us and dust's in our eye and sweat and sunblock dripping into your eyes. You have to get used to it, you just have to do it every day and drink a lot of water; make sure you're sweating enough. Yeah, you've gotta get used to it. It helps living here for a long time.

Hass: Carriers around Arizona have become so adept at handling extreme heat that they make it sound old hat -- and appropriately, they recommend wearing a hat or pith helmet when delivering walking portions of their routes.

Watkins: And now, here's a brief rundown of Postal Service headlines. On July 14th, Kansas City's Negro Leagues Baseball Museum hosted the First-Day of Issue ceremony for the Negro Leagues Baseball stamps. The two stamps pay tribute to the all-black professional baseball leagues that operated from 1920 to about 1960. A second commemorative stamp features the league's founder, Andrew "Rube" Foster, who is considered the "father" of Negro Leagues Baseball.

The vice chairman of the Postal Service's Board of Governors, Thurgood Marshall, Jr., served as the dedicating official, and was joined by former Negro Leagues player -- and current Postal Service employee -- Cleophus Brown. Mr. Brown has worked as a driver with Birmingham, Alabama Motor Vehicle Services since 1980, and played for the Negro Leagues' Louisville Clippers and the Birmingham Black Barons in the mid-1950s. Mr. Brown made national news when his story aired on ABC's World News with Diane Sawyer.

Watkins: Thank you for listening to Your Postal Podcast. Now we'd like to hear from you. Please send your feedback and story ideas to YourPostalPodcast@usps.com. A production of USPS Western Area Corporate Communications, Copyright 2010, All Rights Reserved.

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