

Another mail mix-up at Aptos Post Office

By KEITH MURAOKA

Sentinel Staff Writer

APTOS — The Aptos Post Office — in an "I-thought-you-were-doing-it" mix-up — has again failed to deliver mail to some residences.

Depending on who you talk to, either some 200 residences failed to get mail delivery Saturday or "just a small section" was involved.

According to allegations from Aptos branch employees who asked to remain anonymous, the figure was in the 200 range. They did say they saw "stacks" of undelivered mail upon coming to work Monday.

Aptos Postmaster Carol Clyde, however, maintains "just a small section" was missed. She said it was due to an emergency when a carrier got sick while on the route. A supervisor divided the remaining portion of the route between two carriers and "someone missed a small section."

"It was a you-take-half, I-take-half thing, and each other thought the other had that section," said Clyde. "I didn't even know about it until Monday morning."

Gerri Anderson, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers branch which covers Aptos, said there is "no excuse" for mail not being delivered. A former carrier who asked not to be identified concurred. He said the mail should have been delivered by Clyde herself and by flashlight, if necessary.

"There is no excuse whatsoever," he said. In an emergency it is up to her to get on the street and deliver the mail, he added.

Clyde took over the postmastership last August. She is being blamed by many for what they claim is drastically deteriorating service.

Manuel Subia, manager of the Sierra regional office in Sacramento (which includes more than 600 post offices in California and Nevada), says he is "looking into" the Aptos situation.

Anderson also reported that the most recent grievances filed with the union by Aptos carriers against Clyde are presently **at step two in the Postal Service's four-step grievance procedure. The Postal Service is attempting to fire or suspend seven**

carriers for talking publicly about their accusations against Clyde.

Two weeks ago the carriers received formal letters of proposed termination and suspension. They are being charged with "standards of conduct violations for discussing allegations concerning unlawful acts by Postal Service employees with persons outside the inspection service."

Other charges include "failure to cooperate in a Postal Service investigation."

Anderson said step two in the grievance procedure involves herself talking with Clyde "in hopes of getting the charges dropped."

Failing that, the issue will go to the carrier union's business agent and a representative from the Postal Service's Labor Relations Board, she said. The final step in the grievance procedure is the summoning of a federal arbitrator.

Saturday's failure to deliver some mail is not the first time Clyde's branch has been involved in such a situation.

Bill Lawrence, sectional center manager/postmaster of San Jose and Clyde's immediate supervisor, has conceded she made a mistake several months ago when thousands of Hartnell College advertisements addressed to Rio del Mar residents were thrown away.

The mistake came when it was believed the advertisements need individual address labels rather than simply "postal patron." Hartnell has since been compensated, and Lawrence said. "We do not hang people for making a mistake."

Anderson claims the Postal Service has two totally different punishments for supervisors and carriers. She said all seven Aptos carriers are attempting to be punished for the mistake of only one — the one who leaked a letter about problems at the branch to the public.

Since Clyde took over a year ago more than 60 grievances have been filed by the branch's employees to their respective unions. Lawrence has refuted the union's claim that 12 of the 27 Aptos branch em-

ployees are new since Clyde took over.

Lawrence has also refuted union charges that the Aptos branch has dropped from third in productivity to 45th out of 49 branches. He says they keep no such productivity records.

However, a "factor customer service ranking" obtained by The Sentinel, shows the Aptos Post Office ranked 22nd out of 24 branches. The anonymous note accompanying the ranking said, "The Post Office does not keep productivity figures, but if we did, this would be the latest one."