

## TRANSCRIPT – YOUR POSTAL PODCAST – JULY 2015

**Diedre Tillery:** Welcome to *Your Postal Podcast*. I'm Diedre Tillery. In this edition, you'll hear about a Minnesota city carrier who delivers mail by day and is pursuing a musical career by night. Next, you'll be inspired by the story of a Florida rural carrier who is able to do on one leg what many people might find difficult using two.

It's not unusual for postal employees to have a second career, often related to a hobby or other area of interest. Pete Nowacki is here with a story about a mail carrier who rocks – on and off the job.

**Pete Nowacki:** On a typical spring day in this working-class St. Paul neighborhood, letter carrier Georgia Ramin is going about her daily routine.

She's delivering the mail (sounds of mail delivery);

taking care of her customers (sound of carrier talking with a customer);

and of course, there's this (sound of dog barking and mailbox closing).

But come evening (music plays), Georgia Ramin changes uniforms, picks up her axe and cuts loose as Miss Georgia Peach, guitarist and vocalist for all-female garage rock quartet Beebe Gallini.

The name comes from a character in an episode of *The Brady Bunch*. The sound owes much to Ramin's array of influences going back to the first band she recruited as an art student in New York City.

**Georgia Ramin:** I made a little flyer, and it was decorated with leopard skin and plaid, and it said: "Blondie, Clash, The Jam...All-Girl Band...Call." And they called! It was great!

**Nowacki:** But her current band is much more than 80s punk. Ramin grew up on oldies radio. She also adores the melodies of Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton.

**Ramin:** So there's a little tiny yodel in my voice. I feel like there's room for everything, especially when you're making something new.

**Nowacki:** When she joined the Postal Service two years ago, she was a little concerned her free spirit might not play so well, that her fellow employees might be a bunch of clock-punching robots. She's happily discovered the opposite, joining a diverse, supportive crew of co-workers, many with creative interests of their own.

**Ramin:** I can totally be myself at the Post Office. I don't have to try to be someone else.

**Nowacki:** She also loves the self-sufficient nature of the work. On the route, she's her own boss. If a fresh melody or a great lyric pops into her head, on her next break she can record her inspiration on her phone and immediately email it to her bandmates. As for enduring the often-brutal Minnesota winters:

**Ramin:** You kind of feel like a champion. You come home and like, "Whoo! I did it!" Because what I did was pretty amazing.

**Nowacki:** Rock stardom remains a dream for Miss Georgia Peach. She's the subject of an upcoming web profile for Twin Cities Public Television's award-winning weekly arts series *Minnesota Original*. Beebe Gallini played an important gig at St. Paul's prestigious Amsterdam Bar and Hall and is rehearsing for an upcoming "Battle of the Garages" show in July.

As for Georgia Ramin, she likens herself to the fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant. By night, she's the creative, playful Grasshopper, singing, dancing and fiddling away; basking in the joy of making music with people she loves.

By day she's the earnest, hardworking Ant; paying the bills and loving the sense of purpose that comes with being an important part of another band.

**Ramin:** There was a big theme in my interview, in the interview section that we did for the public television piece was wanting to find work worthwhile and feel like what I was doing mattered and was making the world a better place instead of a worse place. And I definitely feel that way about being a carrier.

**Nowacki:** You can find Beebe Gallini – That's B-E-E-B-E G-A-L-L-I-N-I on Facebook. For more information on *Minnesota Original* – go to *mnoriginal.org*. [To see the *Minnesota Original* story on Georgia Ramin, go to: <http://bit.ly/1e0J33k>.]

(Georgia Ramin playing music on guitar and singing plays.)

**Tillery:** In our next story, Brian Sperry reports on a remarkable Rural Carrier Associate whose disability has not stopped her from providing outstanding service, and that has earned her respect and admiration from postal customers and employees alike.

**Brian Sperry:** When Anita Fee lost her right leg to cancer at the age of 6, a wise grandparent gave her some life-changing advice.

**Anita Fee:** My grandmother always said you can find a different way to do anything that you want to do. My parents are the same way.

**Sperry:** Inspired by her Grandmother and parents, she set her sights on working for the Postal Service and would regularly visit her local Post Office in Baker, Florida, to ask if they were hiring. Day after day the answer was the same – no. Until one day, the answer was yes. She completed a job application, and was put through a battery of tests.

**Fee:** It took two years, but I stayed with it. Then they put me through every test that you could think of like physical tests. So I bought me an artificial leg, so I could do all of this, and went for the interviews and surprisingly enough, it came around.

**Sperry:** Fee was hired as a temporary Rural Carrier in Baker, Florida, in 2001. Like most carriers, her first days on the job were challenging. She quickly discovered delivering the mail with her prosthetic leg, which weighs 13 pounds, was slowing her down. She mentioned it to one of her fellow carriers who told Fee's supervisor.

**Fee:** One of the other carriers I had known for years said, "Hey, if you would let her work with that leg off, she would be a lot faster." So he told me the next day when you come to work you ain't got to wear it, and it improved my time by an hour. I just get out of the car, and get my

crutches and then I just go get the package or whatever. If I have to make more than one trip I will.

**Sperry:** Fee drives a '98 Jeep Cherokee, which she has modified.

**Fee:** I took the console out and I put a stadium seat in their which fit just right in there on it. And so that way I can slide all the way across.

**Sperry:** For most of her career, Fee has filled in on traditional rural routes. Four months ago she got her own auxiliary rural route in Crestview, Florida, which more closely resembles a city route – requiring more getting in and out of her vehicle and meeting customers, which she loves to do. One day Fee noticed smoke billowing from a trailer on her route.

**Fee:** Well. I kept beating on the trailer because I knew there was an elder woman that lived there. I went around back and she was asleep in her back bedroom, and she didn't even know that her house was on fire. We did call the fire department. It was a loss of the house, but at least she got out.

**Sperry:** While Fee is always looking out for her customers, they are doing the same for her.

**Fee:** And I found that they'll look out after me if I'm broke down, or even one other day when the newspaper was following me around one of my customers said, "Do you realize someone's following you?" (laughs). They said, "Well, we've seen people in this car following you" (laughs).

**Sperry:** According to Crestview Postmaster John Blair, Fee is as popular with employees as she is with customers.

**John Blair:** She's an outstanding employee. As far as speed and accuracy, she's in the upper 10 percent. I get no complaints from her customers. They love her and the employees love her. Just to watch her in action is an inspiration to anybody that's around her.

**Sperry:** Fee says her job as a rural carrier has been a real blessing.

**Fee:** It has changed my life. Because you know, you're at a thin line -- I'm a widow and I was at a thin line between it's going to be welfare or working. So I was very blessed.

**Sperry:** Fee inspires those who face similar physical challenges, sharing advice, an encouraging word, and a motto she's lived by throughout her life.

**Fee:** I do not let my handicap limit me. Push yourself to succeed, and if that's not the thing that works out for you, go to something else. I mean, just don't give up.

**Tillery:** Thank you for listening to this edition of *Your Postal Podcast* – and a reminder: We'd like to hear from you. Please send your comments or story suggestions to us at: [YourPostalPodcast@usps.com](mailto:YourPostalPodcast@usps.com).

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