

# Lawndale Tribune

AND LAWNDALE NEWS

The Weekly Newspaper of Lawndale

Herald Publications - Inglewood, Hawthorne, Lawndale, El Segundo, Torrance & Manhattan Beach Community Newspapers Since 1911 - Circulation 30,000 - Readership 60,000 (310) 322-1830 - December 14, 2017

## Inside This Issue

Certified & Licensed Professionals .....	5
Classifieds .....	3
Film Review .....	2
Finance .....	7
Food .....	5
Hawthorne Happenings .....	3
Legals .....	7
Looking Up .....	6-7
Pets .....	8
Politically Speaking .....	4
Seniors .....	2
Sports .....	4

## Students Receive a New Vision



Last week, 128 students at Anderson Elementary School and 166 students at Rogers Middle School received a free pair of eyeglasses resulting from a partnership between Vision to Learn and the Lawndale Rotary Club. Several students received their very first pair of eyeglasses and were relieved to see the world in a whole new light. Photo Provided by Lawndale Elementary School District

## Self-Serve Postage Company Makes Changes

By Rob McCarthy

Dan Frazier makes a living off current affairs, selling political bumper stickers and T-shirts from a small online store that runs 24 hours a day and on weekends. Being affiliated with Amazon, his company has tight shipping deadlines to meet, and Mondays are crucial to fulfilling customer orders and having them out that day.

Frazier says that he almost missed the promised ship date after some weekend sales because the postage company he uses to print stamps was offline for hours on a busy Monday recently. Stamps.com, based in El Segundo, experienced a prolonged website outage that lasted much longer than expected.

Retailers and the small businesses that use the self-printing postage company logged complaints on social media and expressed their frustration that the company told them the service would be restored in 30 minutes. "This service was down for four or five hours today, maybe more," Frazier wrote in an email. "This is not the first time this has happened, though it is the longest outage that I am aware of."

Amazon sellers have a two-day deadline to mail certain consumer products, according to a company spokeswoman contacted for this story. She referred to a seller agreement posted online that reads, "Sellers are expected to ship all orders as specified on the offer; however, Amazon requires sellers to ship all Books, Music, Video, and DVD ... products within two business days of receiving the order from Amazon." Merchants who fail to meet Amazon's shipping requirement can be suspended from the world's largest online retail site, and have their accounts frozen. Frazier had it happen to him once when an employee suddenly quit on him.

Cyber Monday--the Super Bowl of e-commerce--had Frazier and other Stamps.com customers singing a happy holiday tune. Printers were humming, turning out shipping labels for packages and stamps for envelopes.

Stamps.com customers pay a monthly \$15.99 fee, which enables retailers and small businesses to print stamps and shipping labels from their offices. It's a convenient service for a small business owner like Frazier, who otherwise would be making trips to the local post office in Flagstaff, Arizona where he's based.

The danger for him is when his packages don't go out on time, Amazon can suspend him and freeze his account, according to Frazier. Being

late, especially on a Monday following a busy sales weekend, has disastrous consequences for a small store like his. "It can be a huge misstep for an Amazon seller," he said.

Stamps.com is a competitor in the Internet-based postage service business. It contracts with the U.S. Postal Service to sell stamps and postage labels for letters and packages. The company targets its self-printing services to small businesses and home offices, according to its website.

Stamps.com spokesman Eric Nash said the website outage in mid-October that panicked its customers was due to heavier-than-expected Web traffic on that Monday, close to Halloween when sales by online retailers spike. "Staff observed a huge surge of unusual traffic that took us some time to identify, isolate and reroute to another data center," said Nash, the senior director of online marketing. He said the company has since fixed the problem so that surges in customer traffic won't take down the website.

So far, the U.S. Postal Service vendor has made good on its promise to improve the reliability of its site. Retailers and business customers on social media reported very few problems in the six weeks following the Monday meltdown. Judging by the few complaints on its blog site and Facebook page, Stamps.com is doing better.

Customers were irritated with the company back in October for not telling them the outage wouldn't be restored quickly. A message posted on Stamps.com estimated the service outage would be resolved in 30 minutes. However, as the downtime reached five hours, retailers were getting nervous. And they were ticked off, too. "If there is issue please let all of us know immediately instead of chicken out! So we will not waste our time to figure out what's going on!" one Facebook user wrote on October 17. Another person asked, "Are you guys down?"

An oft-repeated complaint on social media, including the company's Facebook page, was that information about the October outage was never updated. Without service, some customers--especially on the East Coast--decided they couldn't wait any longer. Several customers said on Facebook that they too needed information.

"Monday and it is not working for me either. Not a good day to be down," wrote a woman who was dealing with stress and deadlines for getting out packages in the mail. Another wrote at midmorning on October 16 that she was in

the dark about when--or if--the service would be restored. "Down and so much to ship," her post read.

Stamps.com last week promised to do a better job of communicating to customers when service goes down. It responded to the flood of complaints that its Web application and communication to customers need improvement by creating a system-status page on its website. Rolled out on December 5, the page shows if the postage-print services are running. The feature will offer real-time information, thus avoiding what happened in October when customers had to rely on old information about when service would be restored. The new page promised, "If there are any interruptions in service, a note will be posted here."

Frazier is happy with the changes and said he'll remain a customer despite the website hiccups that sometimes make it impossible for him and his lone employee to print postage before the end of the business day. "This is so much simpler than going to the post office," explained Frazier, who decided not to switch companies.

Stamps.com says it was the first company to be licensed by the U.S. Postal Service for home- and office-based printing of postage, but it has got competition. Indicia, ShippingWorks and ShipEasy are among the companies that also sell self-printing postage to business and retailers in the U.S. and Canada.

Online companies have a responsibility to be honest and timely with information about technical problems that interfere with normal business operations, says associate professor Nelson Granados at Pepperdine University. Customers are more interested in knowing when service will be restored than in any technical talk. "The best approach is to be forthcoming to clients upfront," said Granados, who teaches about information systems and is director of the Center for Applied Research at the Malibu campus. What sets off customers is silence or, in the case of Stamps.com, leaving an old message on a customer service phone line up on the website. "The best approach is to be transparent," Granados said, to reduce the backlash from nervous and irate clients.

The website *Isitdownright now.com* can reveal if a site is working or whether the client's computer system is the problem. It's also a place to view comments left by customers about technical issues and any suggestions. •

## Weekend Forecast

**Friday**  
Sunny  
75°/62°



**Saturday**  
Partly  
Cloudy  
73°/61°



**Sunday**  
Sunny  
72°/61°





# PETSPETS **Pets** PETSPETS

## Precious Pooches



Billie

We are looking for volunteers to help with our pet adoption fairs which are held every Saturday at the Petco located at 537 N. Pacific Coast Highway Redondo Beach 90277, from noon-3: 30 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering and can commit to at least one Saturday a month, please contact us at [info@msfr.org](mailto:info@msfr.org). You can also visit all of our Miniature Schnauzers & Friends rescues at the adoption fair or check out our website, [www.msfr.org](http://www.msfr.org). If you have any questions about a particular dog's availability, you can email us at [info@msfr.org](mailto:info@msfr.org). Schnauzers! Bet you can't adopt just one.

"Hi there! I am **Billie**, a two-year old, male Miniature Schnauzer mix who was homeless and living on the streets of Tijuana. My companion, Holiday--who could possibly be related to me--and I decided to take a trip with friends and ventured south of the border for a weekend of fun. Unfortunately, we missed our ride home and without any place to stay, ended up living on the street. Holiday has quite a voice, so we made our living as street entertainers until a rescue group rounded us up and returned us to the USA. They contacted the folks at MSFR, who were kind enough to take us in and are helping us find our forever homes. It's been decided that my "mix" could be Doxie because I have a longer, trim, 14-pound body with legs that are very sturdy but a bit short. I'm still very playful and have retained my puppyish charm that endears me to people and other dogs. I guess that's why I get along

well with everyone." If you're interested in Billie, please email [info@msfr.org](mailto:info@msfr.org) for more information.

"My name is **Holiday** and I see you've already met my partner in crime, Billie. I'm a five-year old, female purebred Miniature Schnauzer who accompanied Billie and our friends to Tijuana for a weekend of fun. I should have trusted my instincts, which are very motherly where Billie is concerned, but I got caught up in the adventure. After missing our ride home, I had to literally 'sing for our



Holiday



Pilgrim

supper' until a rescue group, who works with MSFR, picked us up and brought us back home. After living on the streets I needed a bit of work to present myself at my best. A medical check-up revealed I weigh 15 pounds--and a dental resulted in the extraction of 13 teeth. My smile may be a bit sparse, but I feel so much better and I actually think the new smile suits me. I have a docked tail and natural ears that have a mind of their own. Sometimes they both stand up...but at other times, I have one up and one down and that

makes me look adorable. I'm very personable and get along famously with other dogs and of course, people." If you're interested in Holiday, please email [info@msfr.org](mailto:info@msfr.org) for more information.

"Have you ever met a real live Pilgrim? Well, come to our adoptions and you can meet the next best thing: a four-year-old, male purebred Miniature Schnauzer named **Pilgrim**. After becoming lost and unable to find my family, I ended up at an LA County shelter where I was called a stray. The volunteers at the shelter were able to contact my owner and they put a long hold on me for my owner. Still I waited and waited, hoping every day to go home. After a really long time and my owner never appearing, I was available to the public. There wasn't much interest in a smelly, filthy, matted to the point of having dreadlocks dog who looked so bad that they couldn't distinguish my breed. They listed me as a 23-pound Poodle until the compassionate LA County's Grooming Gives Hope staff took pity on me. After they worked their magic--bathed and groomed me--a beautiful Schnauzer emerged! After MSFR rescued me, I was examined by their veterinarian, who found and removed several foxtails in my ears. It's amazing what a little TLC will do to give a guy enough confidence to reveal his true personality. I have great social skills with other dogs and am a sweet and loving boy who needs a family to love and share his life." If you're interested in Pilgrim, please email [info@msfr.org](mailto:info@msfr.org) for more information. •

## Happy Tails



Congratulations to Nemo and his Forever Family!

Congratulations to **Nemo** and his new family. After losing their 12-year-old Miniature Schnauzer to congestive heart failure, they were so lonely and sad. They looked high and low, near and far for the perfect addition to their family. One visit to our pet adoptions and they found everything they were looking for when they found

Nemo! One look into his soulful eyes and his adorable, precious face--not to mention his over-the--top sweet demeanor--and they were in love. Nemo, now named Buddy, is living in Yorba Linda with his forever family that includes an aunt who happens to be a veterinarian. Wishing everyone many adventures and tons of happiness! •

**THEYELLOWDOGPROJECT.com**

If you see a dog with a **YELLOW RIBBON** or something yellow on the leash, **this is a dog who needs some space**. Please do not approach this dog with your dog. Please maintain distance or give this dog and his/her person time to move out of your way.






There are many reasons why a dog may need space:

- HEALTH ISSUES
- IN TRAINING
- BEING REHABILITATED
- SCARED OR REACTIVE AROUND OTHER DOGS

**THANK YOU!**  
Those of us who own these dogs appreciate your help and respect!

Illustrated by Lili Chin [www.doggiedrawings.net](http://www.doggiedrawings.net)

*Saving one animal won't change the world, but the world will surely change for that animal.*