

from other viewpoints...

## Postal Service deal will hurt newspapers

They say there is no more dangerous animal than one that is wounded. It protects its life and territory through the pain with dangerous and unpredictable behavior. Reason and long-term self-interest no longer are in play. We are seeing such behavior today from a financially wounded U.S. Postal Service.

Through the first three quarters of its 2011-2012 operating year the Postal Service has reported losses of \$11.6 billion – that is more than double its losses of \$5.7 billion for the same period in 2010-2011.

There is a simple reason for the Postal Service's huge mounting losses: the Internet is replacing first class mail for everything from personal letters, to bills, to bill payments. First class mail has been its best net profit service.

Now, to stop a small fraction of financial bleeding, the Postal Service has come up with a scheme to make it a few extra dollars while at the same time hurting a long-time loyal customer.

It proposed offering a special postage discount deal to Valassis Inc. through something called a Negotiated Service Agreement. The sole purpose is to give Valassis deep discounts in its postage costs not offered to newspapers. It gives Valassis the ability to undercut newspapers, taking inserts away, or drive down the cost newspapers charge to the point where they are losing money to carry the inserts. In exchange for the three-year deal, the Postal Service says it will earn an additional \$4.7 to \$15.3 million in net revenues. That is at most less than one-third of one day's losses at the Postal Service.

The commission begins with the presumption that having a federal enterprise competing directly with the newspaper industry is a good thing, but it does not explain how any business can be on a level playing field when competing with its own government.

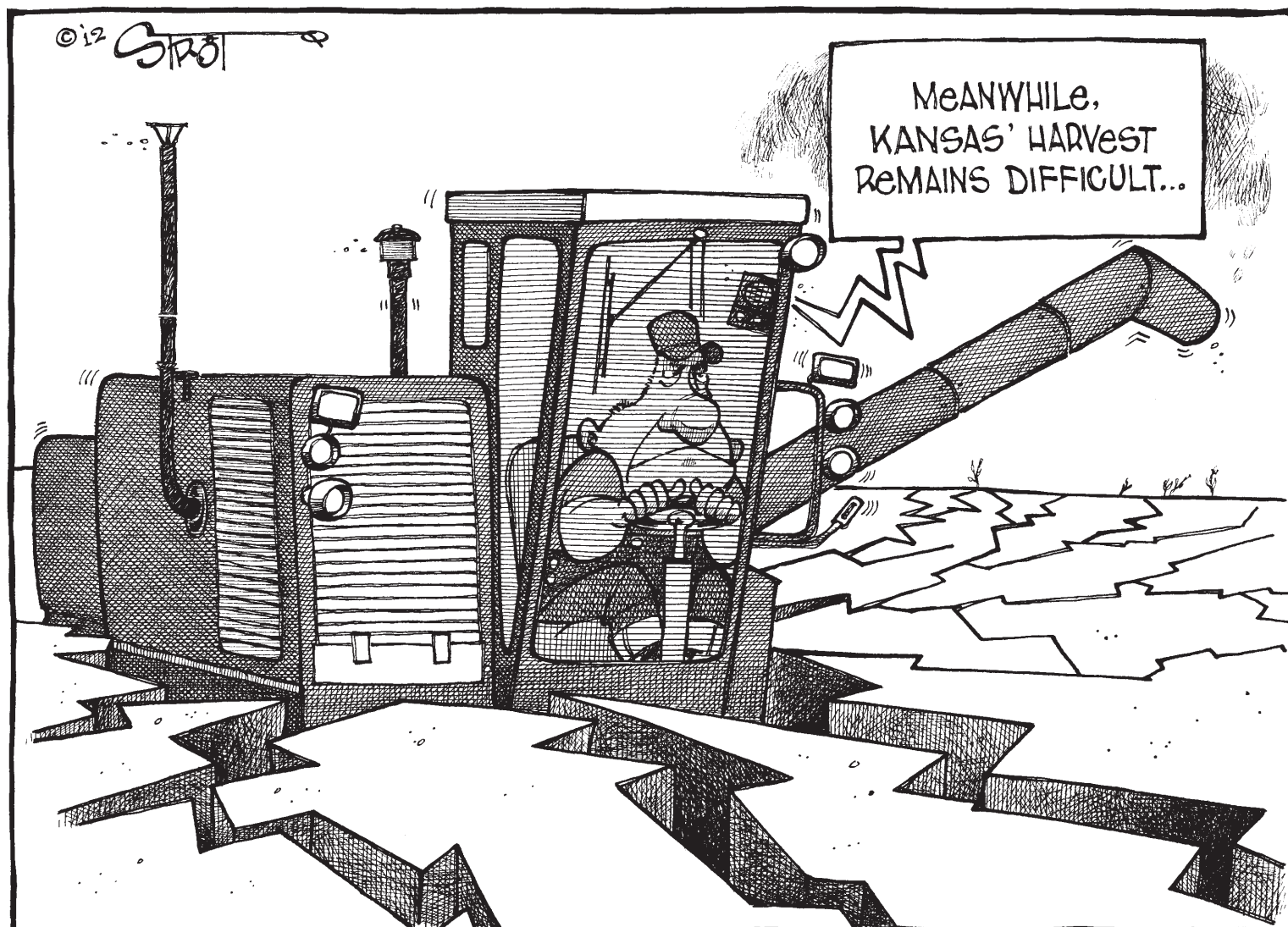
The mailing contract with Valassis is an unfair deal in which the principal result is to drive down the advertiser's prices and not necessarily to bring any new mail volume to the Postal Service. Remember, to implement this new deal at a lower price it is taking away the delivery from newspapers which are currently paying a higher postage price.

The deal was approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission, which is under pressure to let the Postal Service do as it wishes to try regain its financial footing. What the commission does not explain is why this goal is in the best interest of either newspapers or the Postal Service. Nor does it take seriously the arguments raised by many that this deal will force more newspapers out of the mail and create a net loss for the Postal Service after the deal kicks in. What the commission does clearly explain is that it does not think there is a problem with the Postal Service's draining revenues from newsgathering organizations.

We know that in thousands of communities around this nation that newspapers remain the most vigorous watchdog of government as well as the primary source of community news.

The Founding Fathers recognized that the Postal Service needed to work in a partnership with newspapers to provide citizens with the news fundamental to their ability to make informed decisions. Despite the Internet, TV and radio, newspapers still play this essential role. However, it appears the Postal Service is abandoning this founding principle to compete with rather than support newspapers.

If the Postal Service can get away with this deal, which both the National Newspaper Association and Newspaper Association of America are considering challenging in court, it will establish itself as a "business" which can pick and choose winners. We can guarantee you that this philosophy will eventually mean that service to rural communities, which aren't in its most profitable service territories, will see a steadily deteriorating delivery of the mail. —Reed Anfinson, NNA president



## Heading into the Deep South

A few days ago I began a sojourn to visit my mother-in-law and other relatives who live in Georgia, and after more than 1,400 miles and seven states I made it to LaGrange, Ga.

The trip had been in planning for a few months, and will include a trip up into Virginia to visit with a niece and nephew plus do some historical research.

Traveling east across Kansas I had some company from Larry Harper who I dropped off in Sedalia, Mo. to pick up a truck. We made good time, and got rained on between Salina and Kansas City.

I had never driven south in Missouri, and found the highway to be in good shape in most places. One of the cities I had heard about was Branson, and the highway I was on crossed through that hilly country. When I arrived in the Branson area I was in need of fuel for the Chevy HHR.

Driving Main Street both directions I was dismayed to find the only gas stations available were Conoco, but after several miles and no apparent alternative I stopped to fill the tank.

My other traveling companion was Sammie, my cat, who is getting used to these adventure trips having gone with me in February when I spent time with my Mom in Arizona. Sammie is a good traveling companion, and pretty quiet company. She will meow once in a while to let me know she is there. She usually curls up in the back in her carrier, but occasionally she will climb over the armrests and into the front passenger seat.

Once I had filled the gas tank and driven back through the theatre section of Branson, we again headed south toward Clarksville, Ark.

I will admit there are some of the places I passed in Branson I might like to visit including the "worlds largest toy store."



**tom betz**

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Heading south I was following directions I had printed from the Internet. The instructions took me off the highway I had been traveling and into the back country of northern Arkansas. The curvy, twisting road with lots of trees on both sides reminded me of stretches of highway in the Colorado mountains.

As the sun began to set the directions took me to a cross road that was barely marked, and I am sure the people in the car behind me thought I was crazy stopping in the middle of nowhere to turn around to find Creel Rd. The unmarked road took me to another rural highway that began to twist and curve as the road climbed into the dark night.

With all the curves and some hairpin turns thrown in Sammie decided to retreat to the back and her carrier.

At times I had traffic on my tail, and was happy when there was an open place to allow them to pass and allow me to drive the road without feeling pressured - not sure if that means I am getting old.

The road had many blood spots, and at least once I did see the beady eyes of a deer alongside the road. The sides had evidence of road kill of possum, rabbits and even an armadillo.

The road continued to climb, and some white flakes began to fall putting a thin layer of snow on the road. The snow was not heavy, did not last long and disappeared as the road began to descend. At one point coming around a curve I could see the city of Clarksville spread out

in the lights below. It took a bit longer to get to hotel destination for the night, but both Sammie and I were glad to be able to get some rest.

The trip from Branson to Clarksville was about 120 miles. I think I will be more careful about researching the map directions in the future, but part of the reason for the specific destination was the hotel reservation made before some of the trip plans changed.

From Clarksville I headed east across Arkansas, went through the tip of Tennessee at Memphis, then through the top of Mississippi and Alabama. Birmingham, Ala., was a busy place even when it was not rush time.

The final part of the trip was another rural road drive of about two hours to get to LaGrange, Ga., which is on the west border of the state.

The Georgia city is hard to describe as the trees and hills make it more hidden than the wide open plains of western Kansas where we can see all the lights of a city from miles away. LaGrange, I am told, is an old mill town of about 33,000 that has a fairly large industrial area including a KIA factory. Another of the companies here is a Duracell battery manufacturing plant.

The relatives live in a nice condo near downtown, where there is a traditional town square, and across the street from the United Methodist Church. This will be our headquarters for the next several weeks as we explore some of the American South.

It was a long trip, and the first thing I had to do was find a Chevy dealer to fix a headlight and do an alignment. Now we are ready for the next segment, which will take us north into Virginia.

## Get educated and vote

To the Editor:

We are coming upon the most important election since the founding of our nation.

I have been able to vote for half a century now and never has the contrast been so stark.

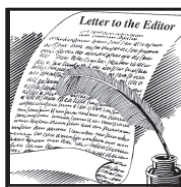
Caesar Rodney, who like Paul Revere, was famous for a midnight ride made the difference of 1 vote declaring independence from Great Britain by the Continental Congress. He rode his horse 80 miles during a terrible thunderstorm and arrived at Independence Hall's doorstep in time to cast his decisive vote.

We as Americans have been so blessed to live in these United States of America and yet many of us don't even register to vote much less educate ourselves about the importance of voting. People all over the world want to live here because we have had the most freedom ever bestowed upon a nation. Yet we are somehow turning against each other and trying to tear ourselves down from within. We are being told we are not an exceptional nation. It is sad that we could even believe such lies but it goes to show how our history has been rewritten. Educate yourselves about our founding and you will see America as the greatest force for liberty the world has ever known. We should not be ashamed of that?

This is a quote from George Washington's Farewell address: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizen." He further said that "he is no patriot in this nation who seeks to undermine religion."

We have a very clear contrast this year as to which candidate believes as our Founding Fathers did.

I believe the Lord has blessed us so abundantly because George Washington made a covenant with God to bless our nation as we followed him and Washington even sealed it with a ceremony at the small church right across the street from the towers that fell on 9/11. The church was spared even as predicted in the scriptures.



from our readers

• to the editor

If you want to see what is and has been going on in this nation (even to the words of our leaders) being connected to our Judeo-Christian heritage, take the time to read "The Harbinger" by Jonathan Cahn. The book will leave you speechless as you realize how our lives are so tied to Israel. The book is mind boggling as if what our politicians would speak right from the scriptures about 9/11 was foretold thousands of years ago. I challenge all of you to get registered to vote, educate yourself about the candidates, and decide if you still want to live in the nation God has blessed us with or if you want to go the way of changing our nation into something different than what our parents fought World War II to give us.

Another way you can be better educated as to what is going to be the inheritance we leave for our children and grandchildren is to go see "2016: Obama's America," the movie showing at the Sherman Theater through next Friday. Don't let someone tell you what you are to think about this movie or your nation. Go, research the facts, and make up your own mind. After all this is your country and you have the ability to seek life, liberty and happiness for now at least.

It is time to stop apologizing and to start

leading, because the world is desperately in need of fair and ethical leadership. If that leader is not America, then who will it be, and where will they lead?" A quote from Ben Carson Professor of Neurosurgery at John Hopkins Medical Institute who grew up in poverty and has achieved the pinnacle of success in the land of the free and the home of the brave. His book is a very wonderful rediscovery of what made America great. He is an awesome man of God who has truly pulled himself up by the bootstraps in the only country in the world where he had the right to pursue life, liberty and happiness no matter where he came from or what color his skin was. Read "America the Beautiful" by Ben Carson, MD, who by the way has a ministry [www.carsonscholars.org](http://www.carsonscholars.org). he founded to meet the crisis in education by identifying and rewarding academic role models in the fourth thru the 11th grades regardless of race, creed, religion or socio-economic status, who also demonstrate humanitarian qualities. There are over 4,800 scholars in 46 states. He gives to charity like so many of the blessed people in this country but does not go out to be a community organizer to bring down the very nation that has blessed him.

My name is Patty Thompson and I am so thankful to have been born in America and allowed to teach for 23 years about the greatness of our constitutional republic. If you want to research our true history call me and I will share with you all that I have gathered over the years. Please take your responsibility as a citizen seriously by being educated about the issues and voting the Bible. For if we are on God's side he will be on ours.

Patty Thompson  
Goodland

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