

Frankly Speaking by Frank W. Mercer

USPS has a \$2.5 billion problem

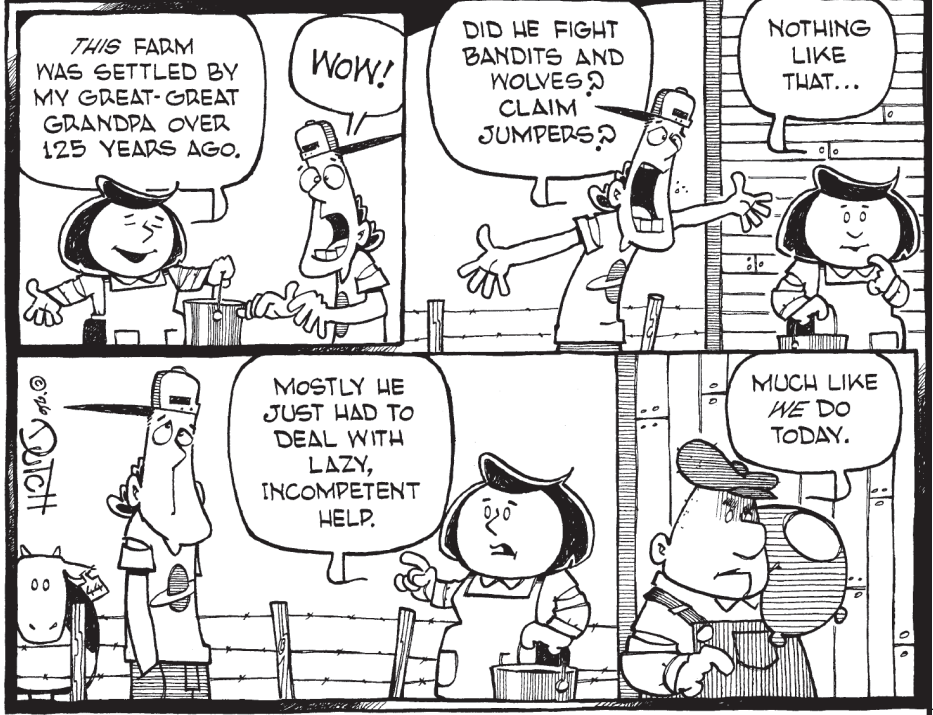
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Here is a different take, on an important topic appearing here frequently. It is written by Kathy Dorchman, publisher/editor of The Sweet Springs Herald and The Concordian, both in Missouri.

The U.S. Postal Service has once again announced a staggering financial loss. For the third quarter of fiscal 2026, USPS reported a net loss of \$2.5 billion. Yes, billion with a “b.” Believe it or not, that is considered an improvement. The Postal Service lost approximately \$3.1 billion during the same quarter last year. USPS leadership says it is facing a severe liquidity crisis and could run out of cash in early 2027 without significant changes. Its proposed solutions include increasing borrowing authority, cutting expenses and, of course, charging customers more. Postmaster General David Steiner has discussed raising the price of a First-Class Mail stamp to somewhere between 90 and 95 cents. But before USPS reaches deeper into the pockets of Americans who still depend on the mail, perhaps it should answer a much more basic question: Are taxpayers and postal customers getting what they are already paying for? For many Missourians, the answer appears to be no. Mail has been delayed. Mail has gone undelivered. Residents have reported going days without receiving mail, only to receive several days’ worth at once. These are not merely inconveniences. The mail contains utility bills, checks, prescriptions, legal notices, newspapers, tax documents and other time-sensitive materials. For many elderly and rural residents, dependable mail service remains essential. Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley put the issue directly before Steiner during a June Senate Homeland Security Committee hearing. Hawley pointed to thousands of pieces of mail discovered dumped in North St. Louis. The abandoned mail reportedly included prescription drugs, tax documents, bills and other important correspondence. Then Hawley raised another issue that deserves attention - executive bonuses. According to information cited by Hawley, Steiner received a \$170,000 bonus during

first year as post-master general. Hawley has also said USPS leaders have received more than \$2 million in bonuses and other additional compensation during the past decade. Hawley subsequently called on Steiner to give up his bonus or resign and launched an investigation into Postal Service failures and executive compensation. He has also pro-posed legislation that would prohibit Postal Service leadership from receiving bonuses unless mail delivery meets established performance standards. That idea makes sense. Bonuses are supposed to reward exceptional performance. They should not simply be another line on an executive’s compensation package regardless of results. When an organization is losing billions of dollars while customers complain that its basic service is unreliable, bonuses should be among the first expenses questioned. Would eliminating executive bonuses erase a \$2.5 billion quarterly loss? Of course not. Even millions of dollars in bonuses are small compared with a multibillion-dollar deficit. But that misses the point. When an organization tells the American public that it is running out of money and needs higher prices, greater borrowing authority or reduced services, leadership should demonstrate that it has eliminated unnecessary spending at the top before demanding more from the people it serves. The same scrutiny should apply throughout the Postal Service. This is not an argument for indiscriminately eliminating postal jobs. There are undoubtedly thousands of hardworking letter carriers, clerks and other postal employees who show up every day and do their jobs well, often under difficult circumstances. But accountability matters. If mail is repeatedly mishandled, delayed or not delivered, USPS management should determine why. If the problem is inadequate staffing, fix the staffing problem. If it is poor scheduling, fix the scheduling. If it is bad management, replace bad management. And if employees repeatedly fail to perform their duties, management should address that problem rather than allowing customers to continually pay the price. The answer cannot always be another postage increase. The price of a Forever Stamp has already risen repeatedly, yet customers continue hearing about declining service and enormous financial losses. USPS reported \$19.9 billion in operating revenue for the third quarter, up 6.1% from the same period last year. Despite bringing in more operating revenue, the agency still lost \$2.5 billion. That should tell Congress and the public that the problem is bigger than the price of a stamp. The Postal Service has an important mission, particularly in small towns and rural America. Private carriers cannot simply replace the universal service USPS provides to millions of addresses across the country. That is precisely why fixing it matters. But saving the Postal Service should not mean writing another blank check, increasing postage every time the numbers do not add up or cutting rural service while executives continue collecting large bonuses. It should begin with accountability, from the postmaster general down through the organization. Before asking a grandmother to pay more to mail a birthday card, a small business to pay more to send its bills, a family to pay more to mail Christmas cards, a church to pay more to send its newsletter, or a local organization to pay more to reach its members, USPS needs to show the American people where its money is going. Deliver the mail. Control spending. Hold management accountable. Then come back and talk to Americans about what it really costs to keep the Postal Service running. Until then, a 95-cent stamp sounds less like a solution and more like asking customers to pay more for a problem they did not create.

Fence Posts



The Word on Main Street

BACK TO SCHOOL
These school jokes came in over the transom.
– Little Johnny comes home, and his father sighs, “Alright, boy, out with your report card.” Johnny says, “I don’t have it.”
“What? Why not?” asks his father.
“I loaned it to my friend. He wanted to freak out his parents.”
– Teacher tests little Johnny, “Okay, Johnny, create a sentence which starts with ‘I’.”
Little Johnny confidently starts, “I is ...”
Teacher snaps: “No, Johnny. You must always say, ‘I am’.”
Johnny sighs, “Yes, ma’am. I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.”
– Teacher tells Johnny, “You know very well you can’t sleep in my class.”
Johnny admits, “Yes, I know, but maybe, if you didn’t speak quite so loudly, I could.”
– Miss Taylor, an English teacher, writes an incorrect sentence on the board: “I didn’t had no fun for months.”
Then, she faces the class and says, “Okay, class, how should this be corrected?”
Johnny says, “I think you should get yourself a better boyfriend.”
NEVER WANT TO HEAR THESE
Things you don’t want to hear during surgery:
– Accept this sacrifice, O Great Lord of Darkness.
– Better save that. We’ll need it for the autopsy.
– Wait a minute. If that is his spleen, then what is this?
– Hand me that ... uh ... that uh ... thingie.
– Oh no! I just lost my Rolex.
– There go the lights again.
– Everybody stand back. I lost my contact lens.
– Sterile, shemerle. The

floor’s clean, right?
I DON’T KNOW
Mr. Anonymous was having a few deep thoughts this week.
• Why is it called a “building” when it is already built?
• Why do they call them “apartments” when they are all stuck together?
• Why is there an expiration date on SOUR cream?
• If you keep trying to prove Murphy’s Law, will something keep going wrong?
• Why do flammable and inflammable mean the same thing?
• How can someone “draw a blank”?
• Shouldn’t there be a shorter word for “monosyllabic”?
• Why is the word “abbreviate” so long?
• Why did kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
• What is another word for “thesaurus”?
THAT’S NASTY
I’m starting to think Mr. Fred, living it up on the Gulf Coast, has a pretty rough life.
I was lying in bed the other night when the doorbell rang. Half asleep, I got out of bed, put on my robe, and opened the front door. There, standing on the doorstep, was a six-foot-tall cockroach. Before I had time to shut the door, it leapt on me, punching and kicking with all six of its legs. All I could do was cover my head with my arms while it laid into me. After several minutes, it got tired and scuttled away. I closed the door and staggered back to my bed. A few hours later, the doorbell rang again. This time, I was half delirious. Without thinking, I rushed to the door and opened it. The cockroach was back,

and all I could do was yelp as it pounced on me and began pummeling me once again.
This time, it kept going for a full ten minutes, and I was so exhausted, I couldn’t even make it back to my bed. I slept right there on the floor in the hallway.
The next day, I was in so much pain, I took myself straight to the E.R. My heart sank as I saw the size of the crowd in the waiting room, but I checked in and waited patiently. It took hours, as people were taken back for examination, and other arrived to take their places. Finally, I was ushered back to an exam room. Soon, a doctor pushed aside the curtain and entered. “Let me guess,” the doctor began, “you were awakened by the doorbell in the middle of the night, and a giant cockroach beat you up!”
“How do you know

that?” I asked.
“There’s a nasty bug going round!”
FUNNY
Mike, over on the Missouri River, is the inspiration for these.
– In surgery for a heart attack, a middle-aged woman has a vision of God by her bedside. “Will I die?” she asks.
God says, “No. You have 30 more years to live.”
With 30 years to look forward to, she decides to make the best of it. Since she’s in the hospital, she gets breast implants, liposuction, a tummy tuck, hair transplants, and collagen injections in her lips. She looks great!
The day she’s discharged, she exits the hospital with a swagger, crosses the street, and is immediately hit by an ambulance and killed.
Up in heaven, she sees God.
“You said I had 30 more

years to live,” she complains.
“That’s true,” says God.
“So what happened?” she asks.
God shrugs. “I didn’t recognize you.”
– The teenager lost a contact lens while playing basketball in his driveway. After a brief, fruitless search, he gave up. His mother took up the cause and, within minutes, found the lens.
“How did you do it?” he asked.
“We weren’t looking for the same thing,” she explained. “You were looking for a piece of plastic. I was looking for \$150.”
LET US HEAR FROM YOU
Submit your observations or jokes to: word@mainstreetmedia.us or mail them to this publication.

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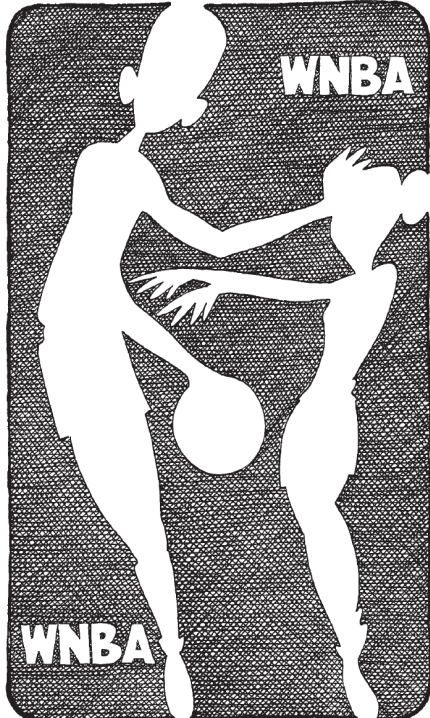
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The 3rd Rail

“UPDATED WNBA LOGO”



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