

Creative Living

CLASSIFIED REAL ESTATE



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(O1E)



organizing
Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Update on mail campaign

Dear Readers: Last year I started my Less is Better campaign to see if 3rd class "junk" mail could be decreased. After receiving many suggestions, I promised to follow up after new rate changes were proposed.

The Postal Service has now petitioned the Postal Rate Commission to increase all postal rates, with proposals for a 30-cent first-class rate and 18.5 cents for regular third-class bulk mailing. Various discounts for items such as presorted regular saturation mail could dip the cost as low as 11.3 cents and non-profit down to as little as 7 cents per item.

After studying the situation in depth, I find that junk mail is only the tip of the iceberg of postal problems. The Postal Service has invested millions of dollars in automated equipment in recent years but failed to properly anticipate the cost of putting it into use. As a result, the post office will face a \$7.5 billion deficit without the proposed increase. The sad fact is that the post office is in desperate need of the largest volumes of mail it can get in order to provide revenues to pay for its huge investments.

When I told the Secretary of the Board of Governors of the Postal Service that I was considering a national letter writing campaign last year, he told me, "Good! Send us all the letters you can get. We'll make 5 cents on every letter, so I hope we get a million letters! Boy, will we make money on that!" In light of our nation's waste disposal problems, I find that attitude disheartening.

WHEN THE LAST rate increase went into effect, third-class bulk mail volumes did decrease slightly and the proposed increases should lighten the load of targeted bulk mail considerably more. Despite popular opinion, first class mail does not subsidize third-class costs. In fact, it is estimated that if there was only first-class mail, stamps would cost about 50 cents.

My present concern is about saturation mail (items delivered to every address within a given area) which is given rock bottom rates because it is presorted and easy to deliver. Because it will continue to be so inexpensive, I fear we will see even more saturation mail being dumped on every address on carrier routes and fewer carefully targeted items. This could result in even greater volumes of less interesting mail, not only for people who don't want it, but also to be handled in our already burgeoning disposal systems.

The management of the U.S. Postal Service is a monumental problem. One knowledgeable Washington expert told me that the U.S. Postal Service is very poorly managed and that neither Congress, the courts nor even Ralph Nader seem to know how to correct its difficulties.

If you are concerned about the low cost of saturation mail and its effects on our environment, you can write to George W. Haley, Chairman, Postal Rate Commission, 1333 "H" St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20268. As promised, I am forwarding to him all the letters I received last year supporting this campaign. My thanks to all who wrote.

Feathery finale Birdhouse contest winners announced

OVER 100 seventh and eighth grade students in Wayne and Oakland County schools participated in the "Best Birdhouse Builder Contest" held at the International Builders Home Flower Furniture Show which just concluded an attendance-setting week in Detroit's Cobo Center.

The contest, a first and now to be an annual event, was sponsored by the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, and the Department of Natural Resources. Seventy-two birdhouses submitted by 108 seventh and eighth graders — as individuals or in teams of two — were on display during the builders show.

In all, there were 26 winning houses constructed by 35 contestants. Top honors went to:

SEVENTH GRADE: Brandon Bogard, West Middle School, Plymouth, a bluebird house, first place; Damien Fron, St. Valentine Catholic School, Redford, wren house, second place; Brigitte Ohlrich, Our Shepherd Lutheran School, Birmingham, bluebird house, third.

EIGHTH GRADE: Amy Watroba, St. Valentine Catholic School, Redford, wren house, first; Patrick Horn, Curt Smart, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, flycatcher, second; Carrie Burrows, Susan Williams, Hilbert Junior High School, robin house, third.

Honorable mentions in the seventh-grade division went to: John Doonan, St. Valentine, Redford, wren; Mike Danic, St. Valentine, Redford, wren; Chethan Devredy,

Detroit Country Day, Birmingham, wood duck; Jim Guyette, Hilbert Junior High, Redford sparrow/flycatcher; Chris Pryok, St. Valentine, Redford, wren; Christine Green, Our Shepherd Lutheran, Birmingham, robin; Jason Kreltyke, St. Valentine, Redford, wren; Angela Kovtun, Our Shepherd Lutheran, Birmingham, bluebird; Terrence Chan, Detroit Country Day, Birmingham, wren; Sarah Raymond, Detroit Country Day, Birmingham, bat.

In the eighth-grade category, honorable mentions went to: Dennis Rossi, Paul Kouba, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, wren; Andy Artero, Mike Yarborough, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, bluebird; Melissa Dutton, Dawn O'Connor, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, robin; Curt Smart, Brian Bowman, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, robin; Eric Bowman, Nate Norton, Hilbert Junior High School, wren; Len Miles, Our Lady of Refuge, Orchard Lake, bat; Randy Skutnick, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, wren; Mike Cebalt, Mike Stytes, Hilbert Junior High School, wren; Joe Helm, Greg Hallman, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, wren; Tom Crowley, Hilbert Junior High, Redford, bluebird.

Judges were Tim Nowicki, Detroit Audubon Society, Royal Oak; Jim and Evelyn Bonadeo, Bonadeo Builders, Livonia; Randy Raymond, Department of Natural Resources, NonGame Wildlife Fund, Lansing; Corinne Abatt, Oakland County creative living editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Birdhouses were designed for a specific species of bird. The nine categories were: purple martin, house wren, bluebird, barred owl, robin,

Each student built a birdhouse designed for a specific species of bird. There were nine categories . . . following DNR plans.

wood duck, great crested flycatcher, American kestrel and the little brown bat. Each participant followed plans from the book "Woodworking for Wildlife," which describes the habitat needs of each species written by the DNR.

Participating schools included: St. Valentine, Redford; West Middle School, Plymouth; Hilbert Junior High School, Redford; Lowell Middle School, Westland; West Maple Middle School, Birmingham; Detroit Country Day, Birmingham; Novi Middle School, Novi; Our Shepherd Lutheran School, Birmingham; Our Lady of Refuge, Orchard Lake.

First-place winners will receive a

Yamaha electronic keyboard, the two second-place winners will receive Roller Hockey Blade skates and the two third-place winners will each receive a Nintendo Game Boy.

Twenty honorable mention winners will receive a Sony radio/cassette player. All students whose birdhouses were displayed at the builders show will receive a \$35 gift certificate from Harmony House, a hard-bound book, "The Birds Around Us," and a certificate of achievement from the O&E.

Teachers of first, second and third place winners will receive a \$200 gift certificate designated for the school program of their choice.

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