

US Postal system on the chopping block once again

Taking another tack to revive the moribund U.S. Postal Service, a House committee and majority Republicans have turned down yet another dead-end street.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform passed, on a 19-13 party-line vote, a postal "reform" bill that could hurt the service at least as much as it would help.

Its principal feature would be to end door-to-door delivery of mail in favor of either curbside mailboxes for everyone or cluster boxes at the end of a block. The committee, chaired by Darrell Issa of California, estimated the savings at \$2 billion or more a year compared to postal losses of \$1.9 billion in the last three months.

Much of the \$7.5 to \$8 billion loss is accounted for by a mistake Congress made in 2006, requiring the service to prepay retirement contributions to the federal treasury. This burden — something no other federal agency has to do — threatens to sink the postal system, but Congress refuses to remove it — because the money goes to help reduce the federal deficit.

Things actually are looking up a little lately. Postal revenue was up 2.3 percent last year, the Associated Press reports, and the package business is bright, with the service competing fiercely — and successfully — against express giants UPS and FedEx.

Ending home delivery might, on the surface, offer the service a chance to recoup at least some of its losses. However, Chairman Issa's math doesn't stand up to analysis.

First of all, he's talking about converting something like 1 percent of postal customers a year to street or neighborhood delivery. It's no secret that the Postal Service is nearly out of cash; it might not last two more years, let alone 100.

Then there's the possibility that this radical shift might drive off more business than it saves in costs. Customers may well be offended by having to walk to the curb — or to the corner — to get their mail.

And while Rep. Issa touts the cluster boxes, each with its own lock or combination, just like a postoffice box, as a safe place to leave mail, who will protect people in rough city neighborhoods who have to carry valuable packages home? Especially the old or infirm.

And remember, with First-Class Mail in a tailspin, the service depends more and more on advertising mail and packages. But businesses value home delivery of their ads. Mail-order houses might well switch back to services that do deliver to the door.

Why Mr. Issa wants to give the service something it neither needs nor wants is beyond our grasp. We'd like to ask why he's not fixing the obvious problems, especially the huge pension prepayment.

We think Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, summed it up well:

"Lawmakers should fix what they broke, not break what's working." But with the Republicans in charge in the House and the Democrats in the Senate, Congress has been unable to pass any postal bill at all the last few years.

Why not try a little common sense and compromise before the whole thing collapses?

Naw, not in an election year.

— Steve Haynes



Coping with life's challenges

Recently, a friend and I were discussing how children form opinions about themselves. She has worked in school districts around the country and was lamenting the era when every child was given a trophy, regardless of whether they played well, accomplished the goal or even did their best. At the time, she said she felt this trend would end up costing our children and they would be the losers.

"Children aren't stupid," she told me, "they know they aren't all winners."

She is right. Someone has to lose and although feeling good about losing isn't easy, neither is it bad. It is a part of who we are or, maybe more importantly, what we will become. It prepares us to cope with life's many challenges. A skill that is often lacking in grown up children.

This week America's Poet Laureate, Maya Angelou, died. As one news anchor stated, Maya Angelou lived many

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



lives in her lifetime. Not all were dream circumstances, but together they made up who she was and what she became. She experienced and survived loss, disappointment and sorrow. These were the things which ultimately combined with other life experiences to become the subject matter of her many works.

She once said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Our differences, even our shortcom-

ings when filtered through the lens of common sense and reasoning, can enrich our lives and expand our minds. As my friend reminded me, children are aware of their differences. It is only when we try to make everyone the same, as in everyone is a champion, that we fail them. A child who learns to accept his or her strengths and yes their weaknesses truly is the winner and will carry with them the good feeling of self-worth long after the trophy is tarnished and put away on a dusty shelf.

My old (dear) friend is right and so was Maya Angelou. Children are wise and, given any opportunity, will recognize their own worth. Maya Angelou showed us that our circumstances need not define or limit us, but rather enrich and enhance who we will become. Life is about helping each person see the value in others and appreciating their value within. RIP Maya Angelou
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Who determines what is acceptable and what isn't

Back in the '70's, television advertising for women's sanitary products began. At first those commercials were acutely embarrassing.

But we got used to it. Now we don't even bat an eye when the subject of impotence comes up. Though the hubby often says "my grandma is turning over in her grave!" Whatever happened to shame?

Then there is the British chick who inquires about the cleanliness of our bums. Perfectly acceptable conversation for almost any venue!

Once a group of women I was with critiqued the wardrobe of a bodacious young lady. Our criticism was silenced when one woman pronounced admiringly, "I wish I was that comfortable with my body!"

I was chagrined. Who am I to pass judgment? Her clothing mostly covered everything. Now when we see someone who has made a questionable wardrobe choice, we nod at each other and intone, "She must be very comfortable with her body."

It is one thing to be comfortable with our personal choices and quite another to demand or assume everyone else will be. Are we pushing boundaries more than ever before? To what purpose? Sometimes it seems it is just to see how long it will be before someone pushes back!

Why does the pushback have to be so

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



ugly? Can't we just say, "I'm not comfortable with that" and walk away.

Recently Michael Sam, the first potential pro football player who is openly gay, was chosen in the NFL draft. Of course, someone was going to exploit that. The cameras just happened to catch him kissing his lover when he was chosen.

While I am supportive of Gay rights I was uncomfortable.

Of course there was pushback. Some Christian groups accused the media of harassing Tim Tebow for his Christianity and embracing Sam for his homosexuality.

I'm a Christian but for some reason I'm also uncomfortable with Tebow.

Why do we know any of these things about these people? Play football and shut up. And who the heck are the Kardashians?

I have a live and let live attitude as long as I don't have to hear about someone else's choice 24/7!

I also wonder why it is necessary to advertise toilet paper? Are there people

who do not wipe? Never mind----don't tell me.

The Sam story died rather quickly. It seems he promised the NFL he would not use his sexual orientation as a platform, yet he signed a deal for a future reality series. Footage was already being stockpiled.

He realized his mistake. We have all moved on, I hope.

But the next divisive time bomb is coming!

Certain things deserve censure. That is why we have laws.

Above that society will always determine what is and is not acceptable.

We are going to feel uncomfortable. We are going to feel bad about ourselves. We are going to judge. We are human.

Quinn G Caldwell, Pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church in Syracuse, New York, wrote a devotional in "Calmly Plotting" addressing the issue.

"Shame and guilt feel terrible but that doesn't mean they're always bad. As often as we let them be, they are invitations to reshape our lives for greater faithfulness. And the pain they cause digs channels in the soul that God is just waiting to fill up with grace."

As a wise man (okay it was my brother, you decide) once told me, "Sometimes we need a good old fashioned shaming!"

I'm comfortable with that!

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