

e Magnolia



Volume 2024 Issue 3 Oct. Nov. Dec. 2024 Holiday Issue





*Merry Christmas, We wish you a
wherever you may be...*

The Happy Tree

For many years I have traveled Highway 61 South from Clarksdale MS to Cleveland MS. My children as well as my grandchildren attended and attends Delta State University. Not only that, I travel frequently to visit and work with my long-time friend Mandy Heslep-Whitten (retired postmaster).

I have always admired this beautiful tree all decorated no matter what time of the day or year I travel by. I could be having a bad day or in a bad mood but, as soon as I would get to the tree I would smile and have that happy feeling of Christmas. I love Christmas as does my children. To have this tree decorated like Christmas 24/7, 365 days a year is such a delight.

I never knew the story as to why the tree was so beautifully decorated all year long until one day I was in the famous Peter's Pottery in Mound Bayou MS. I asked Peter if he knew the story about the tree that I would like to use it in my UPMA The Magnolia publication. He said he knew the story and would give me the names and number of the owners. That way I could talk to them personally and they could give me the story of the tree. So, after calling these very nice and thoughtful people, Gary and Kim Pongetti, we had a great conversation about how the beginning of the decorated tree got started. Gary



is a farmer and owns the land where the tree is growing. About sixteen plus years ago he noticed this tree growing wild at the edge of the woods where he farms. He told Kim that he was going to decorate that tree one day. After a few years had gone by he said "if I'm



going to decorate this, I better do it now". So that year the tree got it's first decorations with just a step ladder. The decorating became a tradition for the Pongetti family. New decorations are added each year. As the years have gone by the tree has gotten bigger and bigger and so has the decorations. Only now Gary rents a lift to make the decorating possible. Their children and grandchildren look forward to the tradition each year as does out of town family, friends and strangers. I know I enjoy the happy feeling I get when I see it.



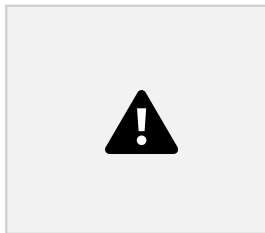
Now I know the story which I share with you all today. If you are ever in the beautiful Mississippi Delta whether you are traveling highway 61 South or North when you get near Mound Bayou MS be sure to look to your right if traveling north and to your left if traveling south. If it's a sun-shiny day you can't miss the beautiful glistening happy tree.

Barbara Morris, Mississippi Editor
United Postmasters and Managers of America

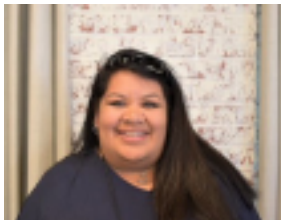
Thank you, Gary and Kim for sharing your tree story and the pictures. Continue this great bond with your children and grands. God bless you and your family.



*Happy Holidays from your 2024
Executive Board*



Jeremy Hanners, President



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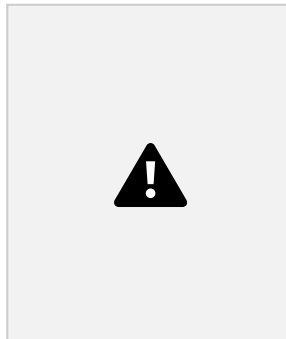
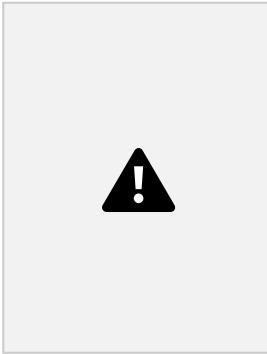
Barbara Morris Sherman Hillhouse



Jessica Misso



Nicole Davenport



Kathy Williams Retiree Past President Betty Roach, Past President



God Bless our Veterans Active and Retired.

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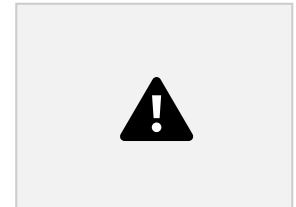
Retiree Secretary/Treasurer

Newly Elected Retiree President

Newly Elected Retiree VP

2025 Mississippi State Convention registration form

United Postmasters and Managers of America 8
Herbert Street
Alexandria VA 22305
855-683-2806
information@unitedpma.org



The views expressed in this publication are the opinions of the writer and not necessarily the opinion of the Mississippi Chapter of UPMA or the National Office of UPMA.

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year... or is it?

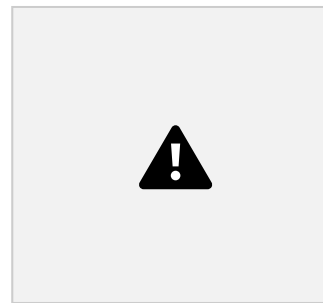
PEAK SEASON...that's right you either love it or just deal with it! As I have procrastinated in writing this article it has weighed on me more this year than any of the last 30 years I have worked for the Postal Service. It is not what it once was and continues to change what seems like every day. Don't get me wrong...I love this time of year when the parcels go through the roof, and the days seem to run together. The reasons that resonate most often is because of the joy we get to see in most of our customers we serve all year long. It is that surprise Christmas card, or that unexpected package filled with goodies from someone that have not seen in forever. It is the special unique items ordered for gifts to give family or friends. It is going the extra mile to ensure the mail is receive in time for Christmas. These are some of the moments that create memories for not only me but also for the customers.

On the flip side it can be overwhelming to some, and downright frustrating to others. We all are different in

our own special way, but all might not be able to adapt and overcome the same. Things that add pressure to the already busy time of the year can be exhausting. Like the extra trips, the late trips, the ones that do not show up at all, and then dump double the load the following day. The profile of the mail is not received as expected which causes unnecessary delay or handling. The employee availability, or the wonderful Fast Track HR system that has still not hired a replacement for the one that resigned in the beginning of October causes you to either deny leave requests or require you to split the workload amongst others when there is no one else to call in to cover an absence. It just feels like the squeeze is in full affect now more than ever. The deck is stacked against us and sometimes we feel trapped with nowhere to go because of the status quo. It is the same again, do more with less. Do it this way because I said so, instead of making the best decision on your own to accomplish the mission of getting the mail delivered the best we know how and if it is not possible then report it correctly. The reality of it is that we must tap into the resources of UPMA now more than ever and not only network but rely on each other to aid to get through these times when we feel like we are on our own. I did just that and called my most inner circle to come to the rescue when I was in a serious bind and needed additional resources to get me out of a bind. It was not only a relief, but it provided a sense of peace because I was not alone and able to overcome a diversity that could have had some devastating impacts or results.

A couple of tips to share as you navigate the road ahead this PEAK Season. We have seen an uptick in corrective action being taken for various reasons. Please ensure that you do everything with integrity, and if you are not sure what to do, please reach out to one of the many Chapter Member Representatives we have available to provide guidance in a time of need. Also, make sure you are taking

A couple of tips to share as you navigate the road ahead this PEAK Season. We have seen an uptick in corrective action being taken for various reasons. Please ensure that you do everything with integrity, and if you are not sure what to do, please reach out to one of the many Chapter Member Representatives we have available to provide guidance in a time of need. Also, make sure you are taking care of yourself physically, and mentally. 1-800-EAP4Y OU is always available if you need to speak with someone about some issues that you might be experiencing currently. We can be the change, but it must start with us!



Jeremy Hanners, Mississippi UPMA President

It's that time of the year again

by Jessica (JJ) Misso, Area VP Central

Hello everyone, hope you are all doing well. I am still working on these COR, city route adjustments. Doing what you love and loving what you do is an understatement. I don't know, it is something about building city routes and making them make sense and safe and getting the base up to 8 hours or take it away if it's necessary. Some of you are dealing with PEAK SEASON, it's here. Let's give our customers the best service they deserve. To our coworkers and retirees be safe, it is crazy out there. Please don't forget, the reason for the season, giving and loving and sharing. Enjoy this time while you have it. It seems to hit a little harder each year may be I'm just getting a little older or maybe it's just the WARRIOR in me. So, what's your reason for the season? #family#Nieces#cureHD#.



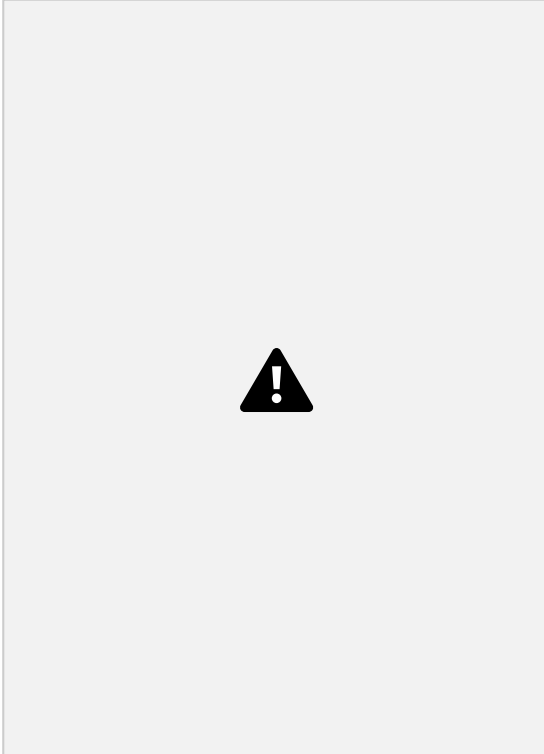
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Retiree President, Kathy Williams

UPMA members share a great bond and I have to say I have experienced this bond and have been on numerous memorable journeys with many of you, not only as a UPMA member but also throughout my time as your Mississippi UPMA Retiree President.

As Barbara Morris (Newly elected Retiree President) takes

the reins on January 1, 2025, let me say that although I will no longer be in a leadership role, I intend to stay connected with Mississippi UPMA and its members, available



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PMA Retiree
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God in all my
of mine..."

Here are a few tips:

1.

Set Boundaries: Don't overcommit or feel pressured to meet all expectations. NO is a complete sentence. It's okay to say no.

2.

Practice Gratitude: Focus on what you're thankful for to cultivate a positive mindset. Be mindful of what you have.

3.

Take Time for Yourself: Dedicate moments for self-reflection, prayer, or meditation to stay grounded.

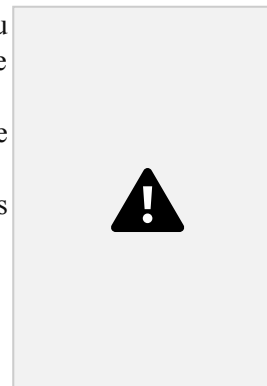
4.

Stay Active: Regular physical activity can boost your mood and reduce stress.

5.

Seek Support: If you're feeling overwhelmed, reach out to friends, family, or a professional for support. Check on your strong friends and care givers.

Remember, prioritizing your well-being is one of the best gifts you can give yourself and those around you this season.



Catherine Bogan
UPMA Mississippi
Secretary/Treasurer

*A new great granddaughter
Natalie James Hillhouse 11/9/2024*
Tis the season to be Happy, Thankful and Grateful.

The holiday season can be joyful yet overwhelming. It's essential to nurture both your mental and spiritual well-being during this time.

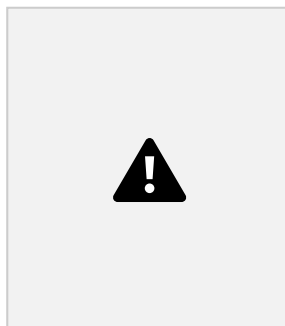
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MERRY CHRISTMAS MS CHAPTER UPMA!!!

It is that time of the year again of the hustle and bustle of moving those packages around to our customers. Not only that, remember it is a time to be with the family. Yes, our job takes us away a lot at this time of the year to do what we do best, but when you have those few minutes away from work to spend with family – do it. Disengage for a minute and enjoy your family and the memories you are making at the moment. I am guilty of it myself when we work, work, work and forget to make time for ourselves in the process. I have tried my best this season to enjoy my family and especially my niece, Josilyn. To hear her utter those words, ‘la la’, melts my heart. The shopping trips with my daughter, Katelyn, and to enjoy eating out on her dime! So glad, I did not get to miss that memory with Kate. All in all, I hope you all have a wonderful holiday this year with the family. Check on a friend and neighbor. Help out where you can if you have the capabilities. But don’t get too fixated on taking shortcuts to make it happen and lose your integrity at the same time. Integrity is all we have to stand on. Do the right thing even when no one is watching. I hope all is well and have a **HAPPY NEW YEAR!** Mississippi UPMA did a lot of great things this year, and I cannot wait to see what we have going on this coming up year. Plan to be more active and involved in this upcoming year.

Call and reach out if I can be of any assistance!

LaVelma Mizelle
Executive Vice President
200 Blue Gable Road Apt 412
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
601-325-5512
LKMizelle@gmail.com



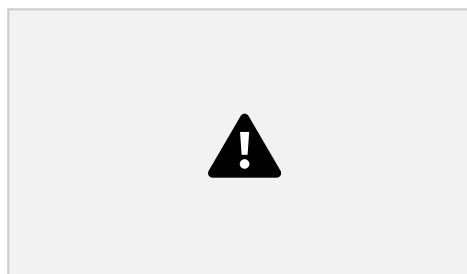
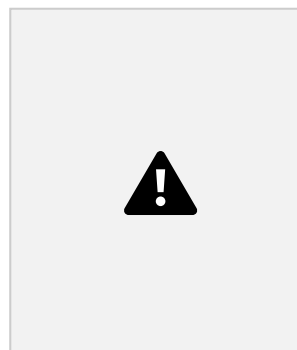
CELEBRATING the HOLIDAYS

It’s the most wonderful time of the year...and the busiest for our working USPS employees! Retirees can still remember the PILES of packages and letters that never seemed to end and appeared the next day!! But the JOY those items gave to the recipients were always worth the extra time and effort to me. ALL of the current postal workers are in my thoughts and prayers...just breathe and remember the happiness you deliver.

I still mail Christmas cards every year. About 120 of them! It’s a tradition I think that is worth the extra effort, time and money. As I address the envelopes, I think of the memories I’ve shared with them and thank God for them in my life. We may not see each other but keeping in touch with them through a Christmas card lets them know they are still special to me. So please take the time to contact your loved ones...you are sharing holiday joy with them. I’d like to thank our Mississippi Retirees for electing me as Vice President in 2025-2026. I look forward to working with our President Barbara Morris to accomplish UPMA goals by keeping our members informed and engaged in current issues. Help me reach out to members and enroll Postmasters/managers as they retiree. I need your help with any member (or family) that is sick or passed away so I can let them or family know we are thinking and praying for them. Please send text message (or call if you prefer) me information. My cell # is 601-320-3475. My email address is esthermartin071958@gmail.com. Information about State convention is in this paper...register and get others to also. We have some plans for us retirees to enjoy during our stay in Philadelphia.

NO matter how you celebrate the holidays just DO IT!! CELEBRATE!! Enjoy the blessings you’ve been given and share it with others.

Esther S. Martin
Postmaster Retired



Mandy Whitten, Retiree Secretary/Treasurer

2025 State Convention Co-Chair



Our 2025 state convention is just around the corner so I wanted to give you some information about what will be happening. There is a registration form in this publication. The sooner you fill it out and get it back to me the better. The dates are April 22-24, 2025 at Pearl River Resort/Golden Moon Hotel in Choctaw MS. Each night room rate is \$89.00 which I think is good. Registration for the convention is \$125.00 now, I know what you are saying that is high but let me tell you what this includes.

Tuesday the 22nd registration will begin at 2, Executive Board meeting at 3, Vendors will set up, Hospitality will be open and we will also have a reception and entertainment.

Wednesday the 23rd general session will begin at 8, lunch at noon, a full afternoon of training, then head to the hospitality room before you come for dinner and entertainment to end the day.

Thursday the 24th again we will have general session at 8 and will wind the convention up about noonish.

So, mark your calendars now and start making plans to join us for a dream catcher convention. If you would like to bring a door prize that would be awesome or if you want to do something else bring some snacks for the hospitality, it would be much appreciated. Just one more thing...if you would like to help with door prizes, hospitality, or decorations please let Barbara or I know.

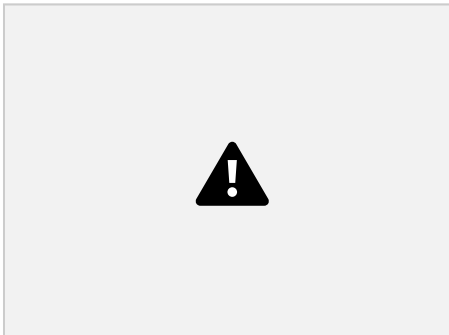
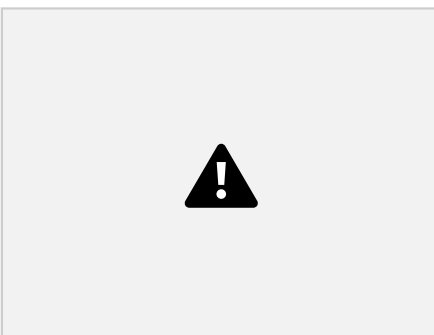
Retirees, when we come to the convention, we will have a new Retiree President Barbara Morris and Executive Vice Esther Martin so come and support them. Many thanks to our out going Retiree President Kathy Williams who has represented the retirees very well.

I know this is peak season for those of you who are working but yet us retirees are also at peak season with cooking, shopping, and decorating because you know it does take us a little longer, we don't move as fast as we used to. I want to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous Happy New Year.

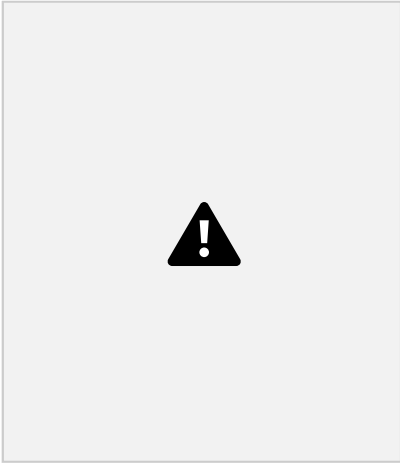
If you have any questions about the convention please don't hesitate to call me or Barbara.

Mandy Whitten: 662-721-0151 mandywhitten@yahoo.com

Barbara Morris: 662-902-3213 barb0229@bellsouth.net



Casino



Golden Moon Hotel Water Park

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Mississippi UPMA 2025 State Convention Pearl River Resort/Golden Moon Hotel April 22-24, 2025



Name _____

Postmaster ___ Retiree ___ Associate ___ Supervisor ___ Guest ___ Vendor ___ First Timer ___ Office

you represent _____

Mailing address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Registration fee: \$125.00 until April 1, 2025 Mail to: Mandy Heslep-Whitten (must be postmarked by dates mentioned)

\$150.00 after April 1---April 10, 2025 901 B Maple Street

\$200.00 onsite Cleveland MS 38732 (Registration includes 4 meals)

Registration ends at 9:30 A.M.

Make checks payable to: MS UPMA



Room rates: Double/Queen/King \$89.00 Hotel address: Use group code: **S4UPMA5** Golden Moon Hotel & Casino 13541 Hwy 16 W Choctaw MS 39350 **PLEASE BRING DOOR PRIZES** Phone: 866-447-3275



WHAT TYPE MANAGER ARE YOU?

submitted by Betty Roach, Past President

INTEGRITY... The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

Individuals with integrity are incorruptible and always uncompromising in the moral and ethical value that they believe in. People with integrity always keep their word, abstaining from lies and excuses, no matter the situation.

TEAMWORK... The collaborative effort of a group to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in an effective and efficient way. Teamwork involves building relationships and working with other people using a number of important skills and habits. Working cooperatively, contributing to group ideas, suggestions and effort.

Communication both giving and receiving.

MENTOR... Someone with valuable experience and knowledge who offers guidance and support. Not just advisors, they are guides that help promote professional growth and skills.

What makes a Good Manager?

1. Motivation...ability to motivate their employees to do better.

2. Positive feedback...good managers identify positive behaviors and make it a point to call them out!

3. Setting Goals...Its hard to know how you are doing if you have nothing to measure it by, set the goal and reward the performance.
4. Set Expectations...nothing is worse than being in a job with no set expectations, employees are most effective when they know what is expected of them.
5. Personal high standards...before you can hold your employees to high standards, you have to hold yourself to even higher standards!
6. Open Door...if you want to breed authentic communication, let your employees know that you have an open-door policy.
7. Delegating...you are not in management because you are the one-person show. You are in management because you are good at what you do and good at helping other people succeed in their roles. Delegating will help get things off your plate and let your employees feel like valued team members.
8. Empower decision making...good managers empower their employees to make decisions.
9. Protect your team...If someone on your team screws up it is your fault. That is just one of the perks in being in man agement, take responsibility for their mistake and help them move past it.
10. Give Credit...Unlike accepting fault for your employees' mistakes, you must give credit where credit is due. Stealing other people's accomplishments is pathetic.

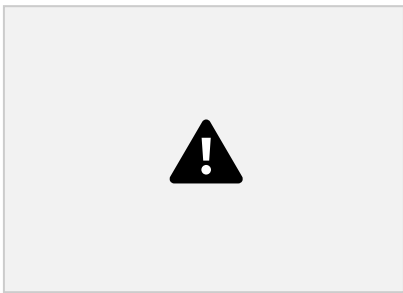


INTEGRITY.....TEAMWORK.....MENTORING

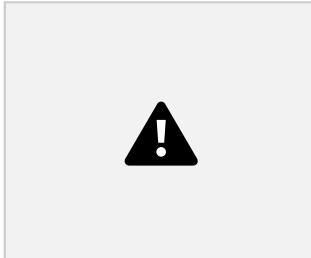
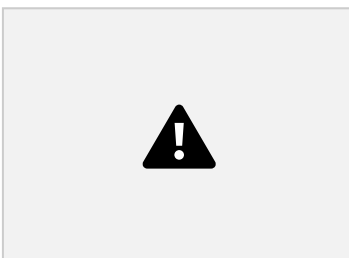
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The traveling Zip Codes have been out and about again.....

Nothing like a concert in North Alabama with 30-degree weather in an amphitheater! What were we thinking, oh yea.....Trace Adkins.... temperature doesn't matter. Celebrating the retirement of Postmaster Sherry Worrell, our Alabama sister.



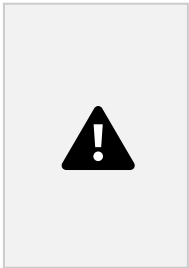
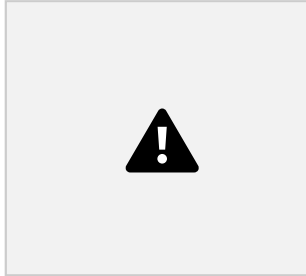
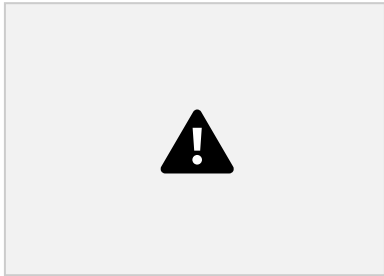
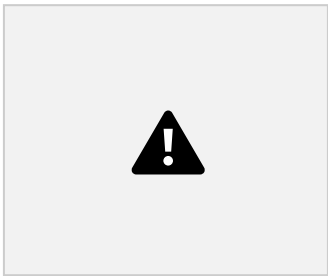
What an honor it was to attend the swearing in ceremony of Postmaster Aaron Luke Parmer in Mooreville Mississippi. Then on to Tunica for lunch at Guys!



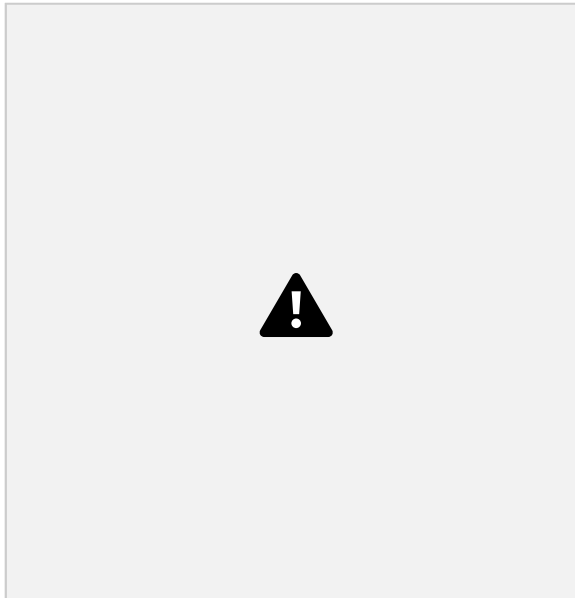
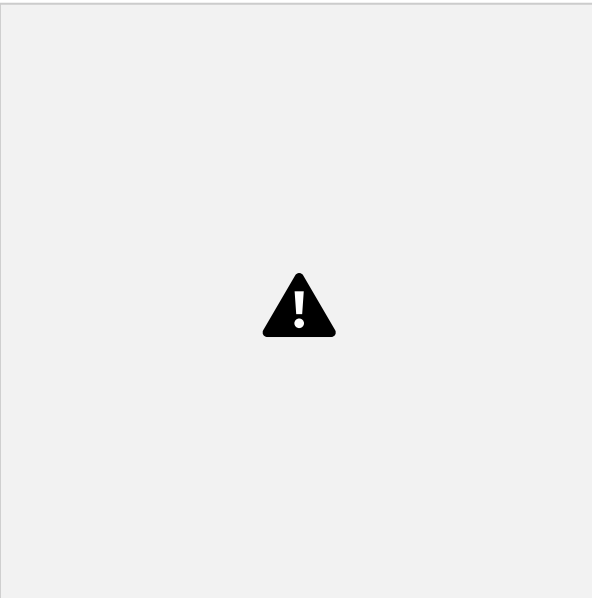
We did a little site seeing while in the Delta along the mighty Mississippi and toured a museum tucked back next to the Mississippi, yes, we gambled, no we did not get \$rich\$. We did boost their economy!



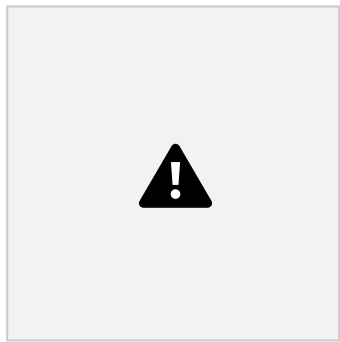
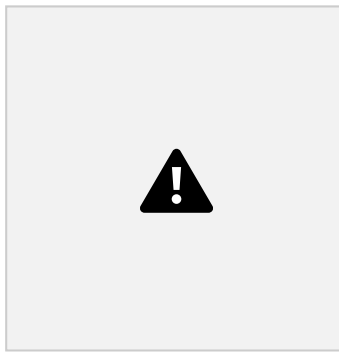
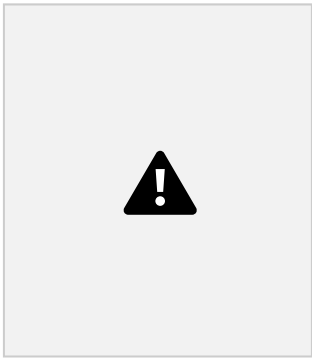
They say everything is bigger in Texas, well you have not been to Casey Illinois! Big Things Small Town. From barber poles, bird cages, mail boxes, pencil, mouse traps, tops, ruler, shoes nails, antlers, key, bookworm, coin and of course minions all oversized throughout town. This cute small town, (one hotel) has increased their economy by becoming a tourist attraction and we had a great time spending several days there finding all the oversized objects. Let's not forget covered bridges, and ole trucks. Along with the town cat that followed us.



The actual reason for this short trip was to celebrate a lifetime friends' birthday in Piqua Ohio, so we visited the Ohio Caverns, checked out a few waterfalls and their version of a castle. continued.....



Always a little time to watch the Grands participate in sports and we also were blessed with a litter of German Shepherd puppies.... and another concert Scotty McCreery, fabulous!



December is a busy month; with holidays we also have a trip to Helen Georgia planned and another concert Chapel Hart. So, to say retirement is GREAT is an understatement....

On to the next adventure..... Betty Jane and Mary Lou, your official traveling zip codes.



Honorable Retirees,

Thank you for electing me as your next Retiree President. I am planning several things for us to do during my two-year term. I look forward to working with newly elected Vice President Esther Martin. She and I go way back so I know we can work well together coming up with fun things for our retirees. That being said, I have some big shoes to fill following our past president Kathy Williams who did an outstanding job. Thank you, Kathy for all you did. It's good to know we can call on you to help in future endeavors.

Mandy and I will start the new year finalizing things for our State Convention in Choctaw MS. A registration form is in this issue on page 8. I hope you will make plans to attend.

May you and your family have a blessed holiday season. See you in the new year! Barbara Morris





submitted by Kathy Williams



39154

Taylorsville 39168

Long Beach 39560

Sign up a new member today.

decision, someone with integrity will still strive to act in a morally sound way, considering the potential impact on their office, their employees and possibly even their career.

However, we are all, at times tempted to waver from doing what is right. Such as reporting delayed mail and accidents. We sometimes look for the easy way out of a situation. When faced with these situations, it's best for us to reach out to others to help us with the tough decisions. We try to convince ourselves or others that somehow the end justifies the means to excuse an action or inaction. Don't fall into this trap. It only has negative consequences - maybe not right away but it will always catch up to you.

Why should we have integrity? Having integrity shows others we can be trusted, we are dependable, and we hold our own selves accountable for our actions. We become role models for others to follow. All of this directly impacts our success - not only in our office but in our life.

As we go through peak season, let's keep our personal integrity as well as the integrity of our office. Happy holidays to all of you. Sta

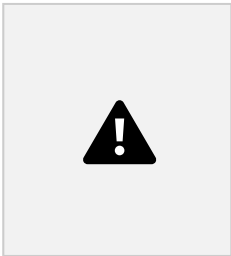
Sherman Hillhouse,
Area VP North

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Benton 39039

Bolton 39041

Keep Your Integrity

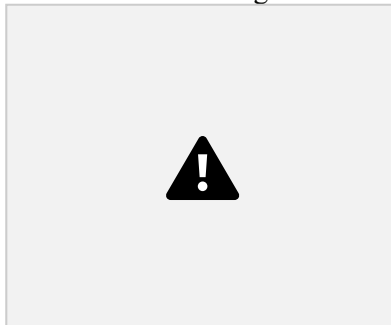


Having integrity means doing the right thing even when no one is watching. It's a personality trait that is to be admired.

Our jobs call for decisions on a daily basis. They can either be right ones or wrong ones. When someone with integrity makes a wrong decision, they will take ownership of their mistake, admit it, and try to correct it if possible.

A person with integrity sees wrong decisions as opportunities to learn and grow, adjusting their approach in the future to avoid similar errors. Even when facing a difficult

Florence 39073



Mendenhall 39114

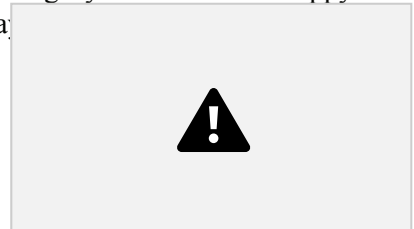
Port Gibson 39150



Raymond

Celebrate 100 Years of the Letters to Santa Program and the U.S. Postal Service

reprint from 2012 USPS postal bulletin

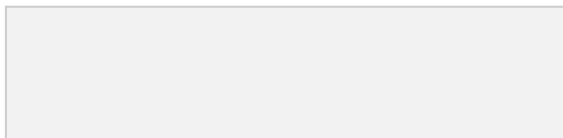
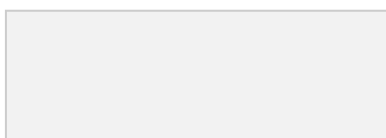
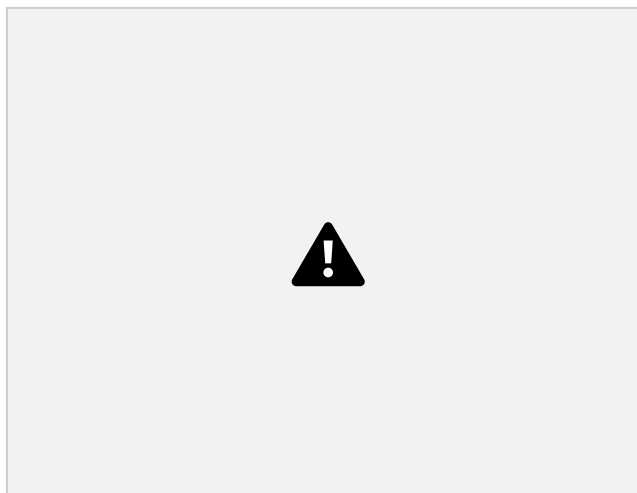
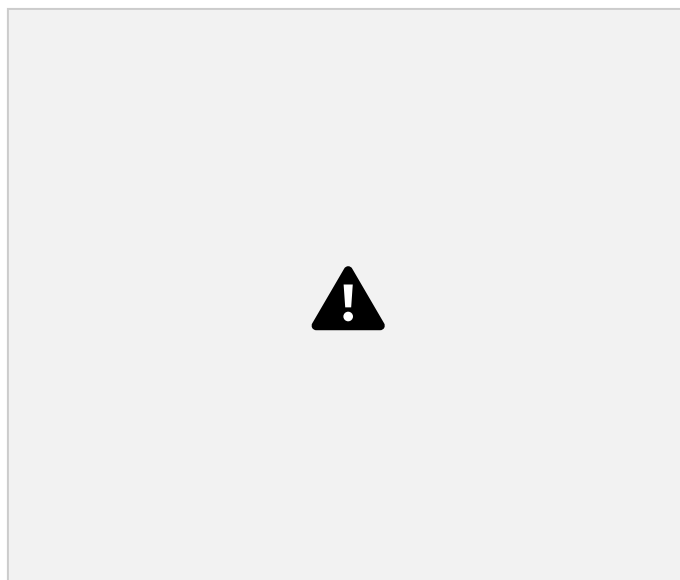


Background — As much as history reveals, the Postal Service began to receive letters to Santa Claus more than 100 years ago. However, our involvement was made official when in 1912 Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock authorized local postmasters to allow postal employees and citizens to respond to the letters in the program that became known as Operation Santa.

In the 1940s, mail volume for Santa increased so much that the Postal Service invited charitable organizations and corporations to provide written responses and small gifts to the children who wrote letters. During the past 60 years, the program has taken on a life of its own. Today, cities around the country have hugely successful programs working with recognized charitable organizations, major corporations, local businesses, and postal employees to make a difference in the lives of children from coast to coast. **100th Anniversary** — This year, the Postal Service is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Letters to Santa program as it continues to fulfill the dreams of children nationwide. A number of local Post Offices assist Santa by responding to letters. Others work with groups to collect gifts. Still others invite the public to help Santa answer the letters from children and their families. Letters to Santa is an annual holiday tradition embraced by the U.S. Postal Service and the public alike. One hundred years later, postal employees, volunteers, and organizations remain committed to making children’s Christmas wishes come true.

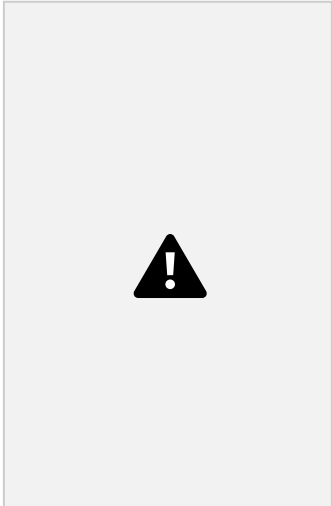
What We Do — The Postal Service has Letters to Santa programs around the country that vary as much as the locations themselves. Some cities and towns work with their local schools to write letters back to the children as if they were Santa, some work with established groups and assist with the collection of gifts, and others invite the public to adopt Santa letters.

New York City’s “Operation Santa” program is the largest in the country, receiving more than a half million letters a season. The city kicks off its program with a celebration that usually takes place the first week of December. Every year, the iconic James A. Farley Building on Eighth Avenue is visited by tens of thousands of people who come in person to adopt letters. In New York City, the program has changed very little since the 1940s and continues to thrive much to the delight of both the readers and writers of letters to Santa.

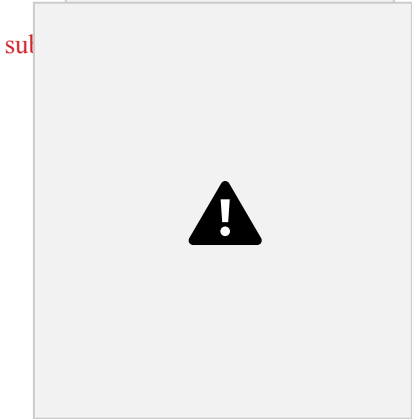
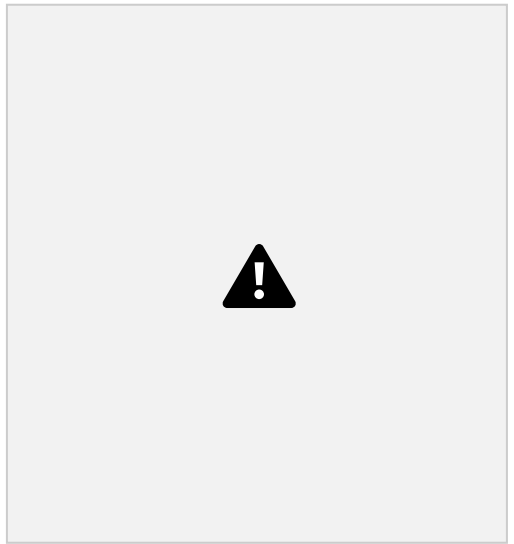
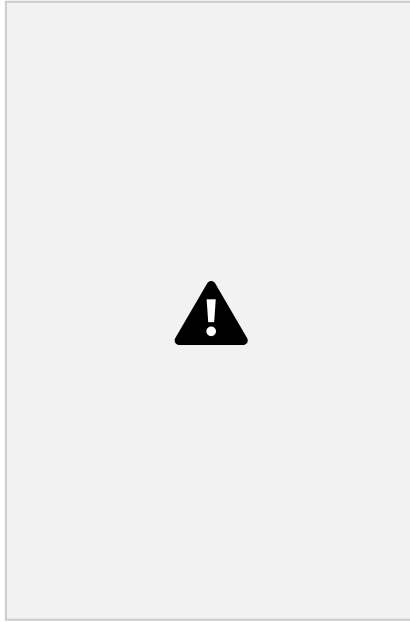




submitted by Mandy Whitten



submitted by Barbara Morris submitted by Jeremy Hanners



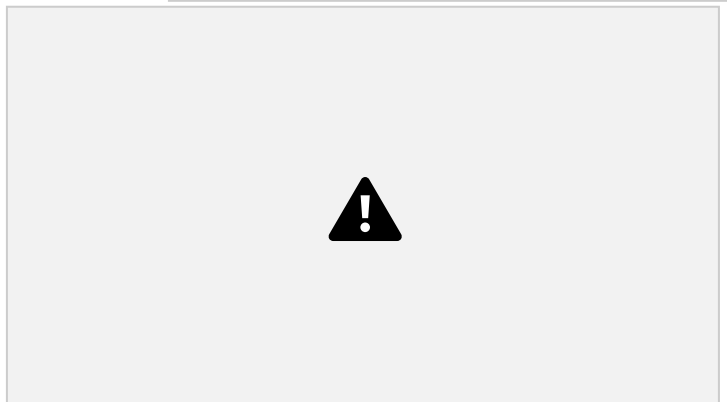
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submitted by Catherine Bogan



by Mandy Heslep-Whitten

submitted by Betty Roach





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Merry Christmas to all from the UPMA

