

January, 2000

# The Challenge

The voice and vision of the Illinois National Association of Postal Supervisors



Volume 25, Issue 1

## NAPS & U.S. Postal Service Mourns Death of 'J.T.' Wecker



BLOOMINGDALE, IL -- John Thomas "J.T." Wecker, Great Lakes Area Vice President Of Operations for The United States Postal Service, died on Thursday, January 6 at the University Of Wisconsin hospital in Madison. He was 52.

Mr. Wecker was named Vice President, Great Lakes Area Operations, one of ten operational territories for the Postal Service, on July 11, 1995. He was responsible for mail processing and distribution, customer service and sales operations in a territory covering most of Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, serving 25 million customers and staffed by more than 80,000 employees in 32 plants and 2,140 post offices.

Born in New York, NY on February 16, 1947, Mr. Wecker was raised in Webster, New York. He attended Cornell University where he graduated in 1969. He began his career with the Postal Service in 1972 in Akron, OH as District Director, Employee Relations. He served in a variety of management positions for the Postal Service throughout the United States. In 1988 he was appointed General Manager/Postmaster of the Albany, NY Field Division, and served in that capacity until 1993, when he was appointed District Manager for the Albany District.

Noted for his innovative leadership and team building abilities, Mr. Wecker completed Executive Management Programs at Harvard, Pennsylvania State, and Duke Universities. He implemented the first extensive Quality Process in the Postal Service and was a founding member of the first national Management by Participation committee. He is survived by his wife, Julia, his parents Samuel and Maxine, his sister Wendy (Vacarro), and his brothers Brett and Scott.

(Source: Postal Service Press Release)

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**"Do the right thing, the right way" - "We must recognize the unions and management organizations as valuable allies in our drive to success" -**

**J.T. Wecker**

From the Desk of ..... *Charles E. May*

The Great Lakes Area has lost a great leader when Mr. J. T. Wecker passed on. All through his term as Vice President for the Great Lakes Area, Mr. Wecker supported the NAPS organization through his efforts to see that his management team at the very least gave the NAPS organization an opportunity to present its case.

Mr. Wecker was also in the forefront in supervision and management training. To say that he had a passion to see that each supervisor reached his/her full potential would be an understatement.

We should take advantage of this opportunity to improve our skills. The best thing we all can do to honor Mr. Wecker's memory is to become the best we can.

Mr. Wecker will be greatly missed by all.

**Charles E May**  
**Area Vice-President**

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Philip and I are shocked and saddened by the loss of such a great man as J.T. Wecker. He was a friend to us here at N. Wasserman & Co., Inc. It is a reminder to all of us that life is fleeting and we must be sure to show respect and compassion for each other at all times. We are all equal in the eyes of our higher power and should be so to each other. Our hope for his family at home and at work to be able to help each other celebrate his value to us all and hopefully share the yoke of pain of his passing. We send our sincere sympathy. Nancy & Philip (Wasserman Miller)



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JT's untimely death is shocking. I know I'm still having difficulty accepting it. He helped a lot of people in their career development and cared deeply about people. In his witty way he often helped me look at challenges in a broader perspective. JT was a truly proactive team builder, process oriented people person who strongly believed in training for people development and doing the right things right. He also stood by his convictions by investing in resources for the long term even when there was a lot of pressure in the short term to forgo that investment. I can think of no better tribute to his memory then to apply the principles that he taught and believed in to meeting and exceeding our performance challenges. That will make JT proud of us!

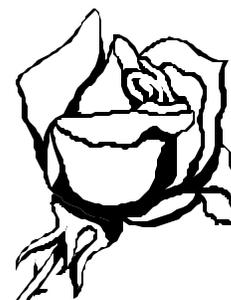
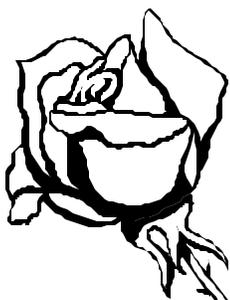
Stan Payne  
Lead Executive  
Northern Illinois Performance Cluster

“In order to achieve, you gotta believe. I believe we can do anything we set our minds to.”

J.T. Wecker

Words are never enough to say how sorry we are,  
With Fondest Memories and Deepest Sympathy

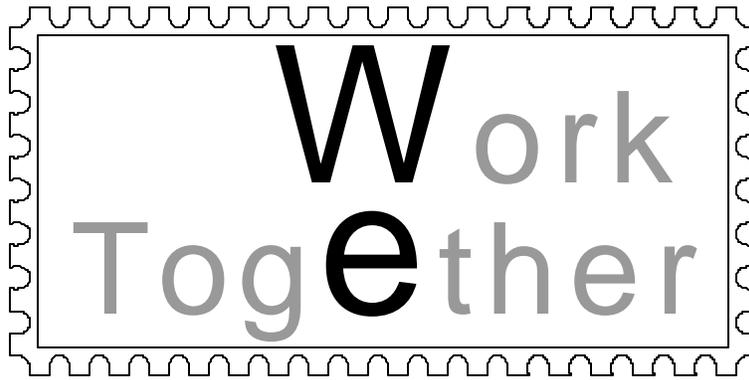
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I was shocked to hear about the death of J.T. Wecker. Mr. Wecker to me was an Area Vice President that I was able to work with when I was the National Treasure for NAPS. He was understanding of our needs as supervisors and Managers. He was always willing to work with NAPS, with problems and concerns. You could always tell when he was listening to your concerns because he would always write them down and then would turn around and write you a letter concerning the issues and what action had taken place or was going to take place. After leaving the national office, I still had some contact with J.T., only not as a NAPS issue. It was always a pleasure to

work for a man like J.T. Wecker and hopefully they will find another person who has stamina and concerns about people as did our past Area Vice President. This man cared more for the job he did than he did his own life. I hope those of you in the Great Lake Area will pay your respects to a man who worked on your behalf and with in his guide lines to make the Postal Service a better place to work. Even though I have retired, I'm still active with NAPS and people like J.T. Wecker will always carry feelings in my heart for his contribution to the organization.

Ray Elliott  
Branch 289  
Vice President



Please forgive me; if I come on too strong, I get a little anxious when I talk about something I care about, the Postal Service.

The continued presence of ineffective, non-caring, "can't wait till I'm out", supervisors drain the Postal Service and its managers of the time, energy, and attention needed to accomplish set goals.

One of the essential reasons that supervisors become this way is the inability of higher-level management to trust subordinate managers and supervisors. Managers who constantly direct every aspect of a subordinate supervisor's role only dissuade that supervisor of their creative talents. This kind of confidence displayed towards sub-leaders is a contributing force to the dysfunctional direction the Postal Service is headed.

Without a "trust" factor, add with that, mutual respect among all levels of management, the United States Postal Service will continue to suffer from problems of poor performance and low morale.

**"The only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him."**

Henry Lewis Stimson (1867–1930), U.S. statesman.

Successful managers know and provide direction, informing subordinates the organizations goals and solicit and trust their involvement. Successful managers will lead people by setting inspiring examples. Inspiring people to pursue a direction that benefits the organization.

What ever level of management a key to remember is: The quality of performance begins with each individual's expectations. How people's expectations are influenced will influence how well they perform.

*That's the way I see it"*



*Richard D. Stryker*

Richard D. Stryker  
Editorial Assistant  
Northeast #1 Vice-President



### **Cardinal Golf Course**

**25 Beach Road, Effingham, 217-868-2860**

18-hole public golf course. Daily 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. April to October

### **Fore-Way Challenge Golf & Driving Range**

**25 Lake Sara Road, Effingham, 217-868-5418**

9-hole Par 3 course, very challenging, driving range, outings, family oriented. Daily 8 a.m. to Dark March to November.



### **Bowling**

**K-Bowl North Keller Dr., Effingham, 217-342-4145**

32 lanes of Brunswick automatic scoring bumper system for the small bowlers. Next to Keller Convention Center. Su-Th 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.; Fr-Sa 12 p.m. to 12 a.m.

**Silver Dollar Lanes 2300 S. Banker St., Effingham, 217-342-3939**

Bowling center and lounge, pro-shop, arcade and billiards. Bumper lanes for young bowlers. Galaxy bowling on Saturday nights. Daily 1 p.m. to 11 p.m.

### **Alwerdt's Gardens**

**I-70, South of Altamont Exit, 618-483-5798**

Unusual Garden Center specializing in herbs, perennials and ornamental landscape plants. Over 4 acres of display gardens featuring over 1000 varieties of plants.

April 15 to June 15, Mon. - Sat. 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sun. 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

June 16 to October 15, Mon. - Sat. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### **MY Garage R & D Center/Corvette Museum**

**Mid America Designs, Inc., One Mid America Place, North Route 45, Effingham**

217-347-5591, 800-500-1500

The "MY Garage R & D Center/Museum" features Mike Yager's continuously expanding showcase of classic and low-mileage Corvettes, in addition to a wide array of Corvette Memorabilia. The entire collection is displayed in a unique 1950's-60's style backdrop, complete with storefront settings and jukebox music. Of the 30+ Corvettes on display, highlights include the "Last C4", the CERV 1, SCCA Challenge Race Cars, and a 1954 Roadster. Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### **Downtown Effingham**

**Jefferson Avenue, 217-342-4147**

Downtown Effingham is a quaint, friendly area with over 25 shops and several restaurants. The tree-lined streets and charming store fronts welcome shoppers and browsers alike. Antiques, Arts & Crafts, Apparel for all ages, Furniture, Decorating & Florals, Hardware, Collectibles. Free parking.

### **K-Square Manufacturer's Outlet Center**

**Avenue of Mid America, 217-342-4343**

Over 20 stores to shop, huge savings of 20-75%. Convenient location next to lodging and dining. London Fog, Banister Shoes, Bon Worth, Bugle Boy, Capers, Claire's, Collector's Dream, Corning Revere, Dan River, Famous Brands Housewares, Fannie May Candies, General Nutrition, Hush Puppies, Food Court, Kids 4 Less, Kitchen Collection, L'eggs-Hanes-Bali, Paper Factory, Publishers Warehouse, U.S. Factory Outlets, Dress Barn, Video Blowout. Wal-Mart adjacent. Free Parking

**NAPS Convention Credential**  
**Illinois State Convention, May 18-20, 2000**  
**Keller Ramada Convention Center, Effingham IL**  
**Registration fee: \$80 by March 30, \$90 after April 1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Will be attending the convention as:**

- Delegate       Auxiliary Delegate       Retiree       Guest

**Request for committee assignment:**

- Constitution & Bylaws     Rules       Budget       Resolutions       Audit       Reception

Certified by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Branch Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Branch # \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Keep the original certified credential and bring it to the registration table. Send a photocopy along with a check payable to NAPS BRANCH 501 to:**

**NAPS BRANCH 501**  
**PO BOX 43**  
**ELKVILLE IL 62932-0043**

Branch 501 Secretary
_____
Check # _____
Amount _____

**Keller Ramada Inn & Convention Center**  
**Exit 160 on I-57 / I-70 at Illinois 32 / 33**  
**National Association of Postal Supervisors**  
**Illinois State Convention, May 18-20, 2000**

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Sharing a room with \_\_\_\_\_

- Single (\$50.00 + Tax)  
 Double (\$57.00 + Tax)  
 Triple (\$57.00 + Tax)  
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**Check in after 2 PM**  
**Check out is noon**

**By Mail:**

**Keller Ramada Inn & Convention Center**  
**PO Box 747**  
**Effingham IL 62401-0747**

By Phone: 800 535-0546

By FAX: 217 347-8757

## Convention at the Crossroads

Effingham, Illinois, "The Crossroads of America," will be the site of the Illinois State Convention, May 18-20, 2000. The Thelma Keller Ramada Inn and Convention Center, a Ramada of the Year winner, is noted throughout southern and central Illinois for its great hospitality and fine dining. The hotel has indoor and outdoor pools, a spa, sauna room, exercise rooms, and two restaurants. It's a short walk to bowling, the Finish Line Teletrack facility, and countless other dining choices. There's plenty of golf in the area, and for those who like to shop, plan a stop at the Factory Stores at Tuscola, forty miles north of Effingham, one of the largest outlet malls in Illinois, with over 60 manufacturer's factory stores.

The convention will follow the usual schedule

of registration, a training seminar, and group activities on Thursday, general sessions, a joint luncheon, and evening banquet on Friday, and the closing session and installation luncheon on Saturday. Einar Dhyrkopp, Chairman of the Postal Board of Governors, has been a guest at several of our branch functions, and we hope he will be able to address the convention. A complete schedule will be mailed to all registrants.

Elsewhere in this issue are registration forms for both the hotel and the convention. Please make lodging arrangements directly with the hotel; be sure to mention that you are a NAPS member if you register by phone. Send the convention credential form--as soon as possible, please--directly to Branch 501.

The officers and members of William J. Miriani Branch 501 look forward to hosting our fellow NAPS members in Effingham.

-----Dan Finnegan, President, Branch 501



### "Move it on up" Dan Rendleman State Vice-President

When dealing with supervisor problems as a branch president or a representative, we all know that it is best to solve it at the lowest level. That way the problem is resolved quickly. If this does not happen, move it on up to the next level and do not stop at the district or area.

Your goal is to get it resolved and if not to headquarters level so the executive board can handle the problem it is that plain and simple. This also lets our people in Washington know what is going on in the field. I can tell you from experience that if

I had excepted no from the local or district levels and had given up I would not have been doing my job as a NAPS representative.

Because my issues were resolved at the National level and I had some very happy members. Do not get me wrong; most issues are resolved at the local level but do not give up. As far as I am concerned NAPS number ONE priority is the elimination of fear throughout our ranks we need every manager and supervisors' cooperation for accomplishing this goal.

By the time, you all read this my wife "the mayor" or the "saint" as I call her will be recuperating from hip replacement surgery on 1/10/00 and is recovering very well. I want to thank everyone for the phone calls and flowers. I will try to be a good nurse and housewife for her.

Now for some bad and good news, If you have not all heard Joe Musolf our ex North Central VP who took a job at Postal Headquarters retired on 1/1/00 the good news is he is now working again at NAPS headquarters, his knowledge and professionalism will be a plus to all of us. Dan Finnigan our branch president is working hard on our state convention and I am looking forward to seeing all of you soon.

# Non-Bargaining Appeal Process

Is the grievance procedure for non-bargaining unit employees frustrating you? Do you find it easier to pull hens' teeth than to get a written decision from managers? Until December 1999, it seemed like I was fighting a losing battle whenever I filed grievances in an installation that shall remain anonymous. I just could not get an answer. The Great Lakes Area office has come to the rescue. After waiting a month for responses to Step A and Step B grievances, I appealed to Cheryl McDonnell, Manager Human Resources, for a decision. In the letter to Cheryl I included copies of the discipline, the supervisor's response to the grievance, any additional correspondence to management from the disciplined supervisor or me, and all related documents. I labeled documents Exhibit #1, #2, #3, etc. and referred to them by number and name (i.e., Letter of Warning, Exhibit #1) in my narrative. In the past, this too has been a slow and unrewarding process.

Easier  
to Pull  
Hens'  
Teeth

On December 15, 1999, I was pleasantly surprised to find an eight-page legalistic document in my mailbox from the Appeals Processing Center, Great Lakes/Midwest Areas. It was captioned, SUPERVISOR X, Appellant v. U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, Agency. The top sheet was the "Initial Order" which ordered the installation to file (i.e., mail) the material listed in Exhibit A within 15 days of receipt of this order. Exhibit B described the manner in which the installation's record of proceedings must be organized. The Initial Order asserted that, "It is the policy of the Area to decide an appeal within 60 days after the appeal is received." The specific request was:

1. Designation of Agency Representative.
2. Any grievance or any allegation of discrimination raised with the agency or Appellant or on his/her behalf concerning the action Appellant seeks to appeal and the date any grievance or any formal complaint was filed.
3. Any decision issued by the installation on such an allegation.
4. PS Form 50 showing the date and nature of Appellant's last appointment.
5. The Notice of Proposed Adverse Action.
6. Appellant's written reply, if any.
7. Summary of Appellant's personal reply, if any.
8. The Letter of Decision.
9. Evidence of the dates Appellant received the notice of proposed action and decision.
10. Evidence supporting the action. EACH AND EVERY ITEM IN THIS SECTION MUST BE SEPARATELY TABBED AND INDEXED; and
11. Response to material issues raised by Appellant. IF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE IS INCLUDED WITH YOUR ARGUMENT, IT MUST BE SEPARATELY TABBED AND INDEXED.

THE ABOVE INFORMATION MUST BE FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AREA'S SERVICE REQUIREMENTS NO LATER THAN 15 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS ORDER ACKNOWLEDGING THE APPEAL.



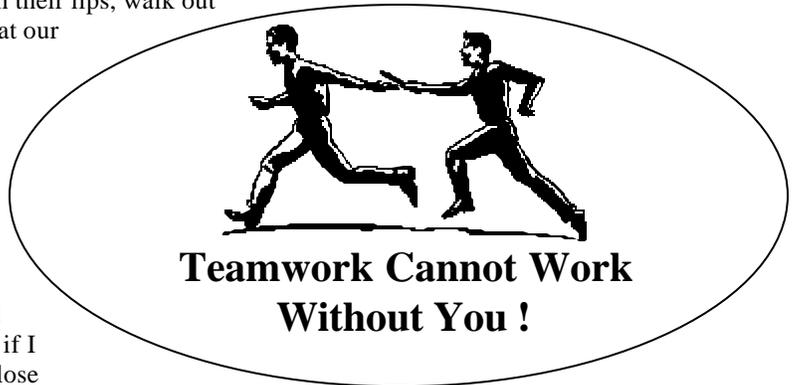
On January 5, 2000 I had a written decision from the installation. The grievance was resolved. Don't wait until hell freezes over to get an answer from a "busy" manager. File a Non-Bargaining Appeal.

Nancy L. Wesley  
President  
NAPS, IL State Branch

**The greatest** single cause of poor performance in the Postal Service today are managers and supervisors, who acknowledge expectations with their lips, walk out the door and deny them by example. This is what our employees find unbelievable.

We all say the "right things" when the "right people" are around us. Give expectations; hold employees' accountable, correct poor performance, etc. But deep down we're asking; is this one for the employee or is this one for the employer? If I jumble them together, will it cause a conflict? This time I cannot disguise all the doubt I'm feeling. What if I stumble? What if I fall? Do they see the fear in my eyes? I'll just close them and allow the inefficiencies to continue.

I can't take this stress any longer, what reason should I use to take off today? They won't hold me accountable nor will they correct my performance, for "they" are just the same.



It's easy to prevent most falls. All you have to do is follow one simple piece of advice: Watch where you're going.

Unfortunately, this is much easier said than done. But even if you don't pay attention to every step you take, at least take the time to pay attention to the more common fall hazards cited by the National Safety Council:

- hidden steps
- smooth surfaces
- wet spots
- loose, irregular surfaces
- oil and grease



Some other hazards that are important to look out for include:

- unsafe stairs
- obstructed aisles
- improper shoes
- moving too fast
- bad lighting

### What Can I Do To Help?

After understanding the hazards, it's important to focus on prevention. Here are some quick tips we can all follow:



1. Remember good housekeeping.
2. Report any lighting problems.
3. Report any hazardous floors.
4. If you are involved in any cleanup operations, please mark off slippery floors.
5. If you notice any spills or greasy surfaces, clean them up or report them to someone who can.
6. Never ever run cords, cables or hoses across high-traffic areas.
7. Wear proper shoes.

# NAPS State Legislative News

It's that time of the year again when we as NAPS members need to start thinking about the Legislative Training Seminar in Washington DC scheduled for **April 2 through April 4, 2000**. To register for the conference, registration forms have been included in publications of "The Postal Supervisor".

For those of you that have never attended one of these seminars, let's start out the new millennium on the right foot and get involved in Postal Service's future.

Many of you are aware that there are many in Congress that would like to see the Postal Service change. Not in the way that we would like it changed. This doesn't necessarily mean secure jobs for us. Representative Philip Crane as always continues his mission to privatize the Postal Service. There are others as well. This is a real threat, especially in the present environment.

If Postal employees fail to discuss Postal issues with Congressman Crane and all of the other representatives, what arguments do you think they will hear? I'll tell you. UPS, Federal Express, etc. If you think that will bode well for Postal employees, then do nothing. If you think that it might hurt Postal employees, then I ask you to get involved.

The first step is to get involved in your branches. The second step is to work with the branch legislative representative. The third step is to attend Legislative conferences such as the one listed above to get up-to-date information. This will give you the knowledge necessary to discuss postal issues intelligently.

There is one thing that I would like everyone to do right now. Write a letter to your congressman and senators of Illinois. A hot issue at the current time is S.1472, introduced by Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) and H.R. 2631, introduced by Representative Tom Davis (R-VA) that would repeal the .5% increase in employee contributions to the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund required by the Balanced Budget Agreement of 1997.

Send letters to:           Honorable John/Jane Doe  
                                  US House of Representatives  
                                  Washington DC 20515

Honorable John/Jane Doe  
US Senate  
Washington DC 20510

I think that all of you remember when extra money was taken out of your paychecks with a promise that it wouldn't continue indefinitely. Well, here's our chance to insure that we start getting that money back.



Below is listed a NAPS congressional action letter to repeal the unneeded payroll tax increase for postal and federal workers.

**Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_:**

**As a member of the National Association of Postal Supervisors, I am writing to request your support for legislation introduced by Senator Paul Sarbanes, S.1472/ Congressman Tom Davis, H.R. 2631 to repeal the .5% increase in employee contributions to the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund (CSRDF) required by the Balanced Budget Agreement of 1997.**

**Under the BBA, federal employee contributions to the CSRDF increased by .25% in 1999, and will increase by .15% in 2000 and .1% in 2001. The .5% increase in employee contributions is set to expire after December 31, 2002. S. 1472/H.R. 2631 would prevent future increases and repeal the .25% increase at the end of this year.**

**The increased employee contribution to the retirement trust fund was made at a time when it was required to balance the budget. The remarkable strength of the economy over the past two years, however, has turned the debate on Capitol Hill from how to balance the budget toward how to spend the surplus.**

**Now that Congress has gone on record in support of spending a portion of the future projected budget surplus on a \$792 billion tax cut package, I believe it is time for you to consider returning my contribution toward a deficit that no longer exists.**

**I urge you to co-sponsor this important legislation.**

**Sincerely,**

Please take the time to write this letter and send it to Washington. It will take about 15 minutes of your time and as a result you will get more money back on your paycheck.

Please, if there are any questions, contact your NAPS branch legislative representative or you can contact me at:

Michael B. Fuechtmann  
NAPS State Legislative Representative  
PO Box 72691  
Roselle, IL 60172-2691  
MMFecman@aol.com

**NAPS**  
BRANCH 34  
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January, 2000

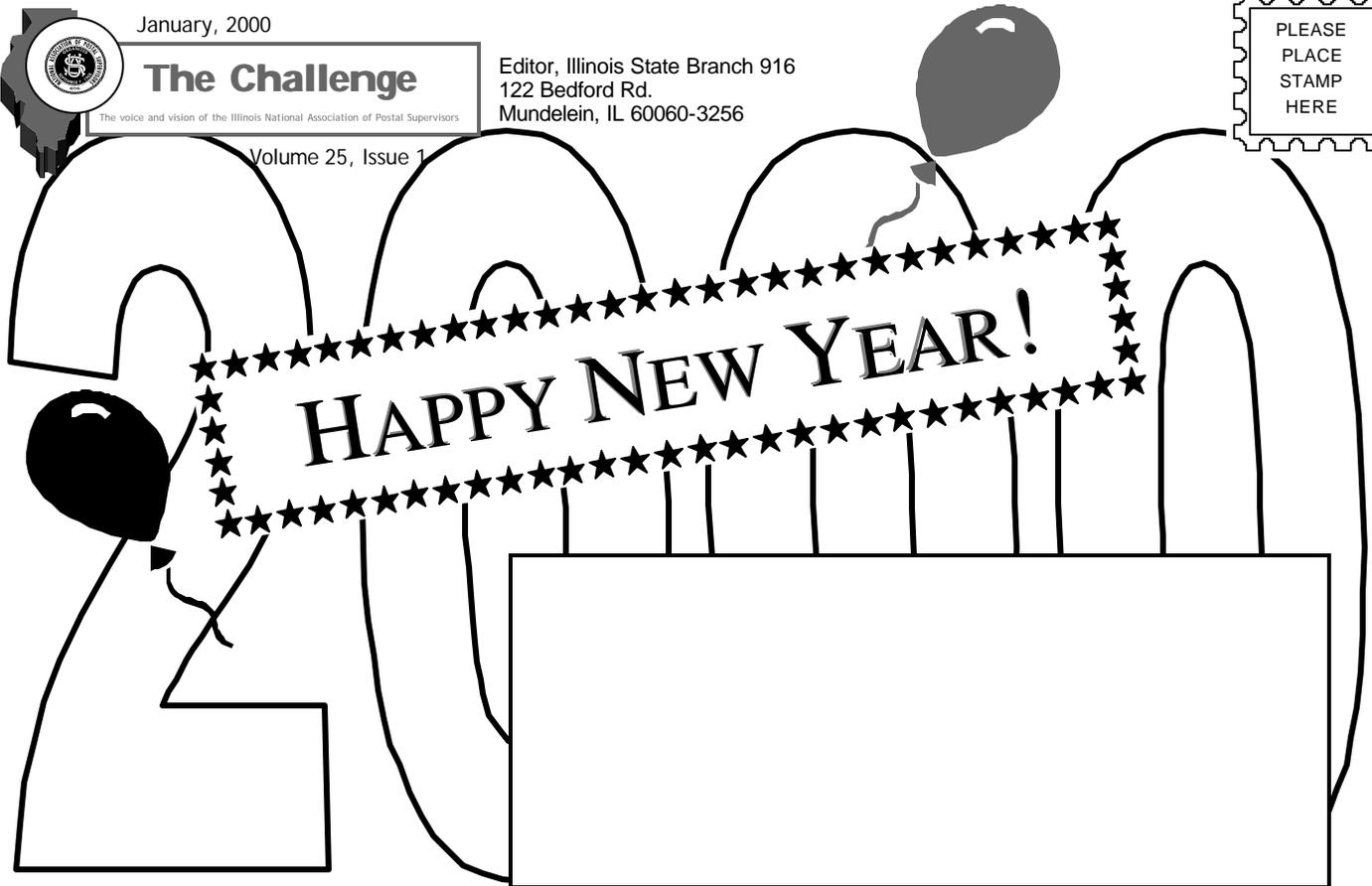


## The Challenge

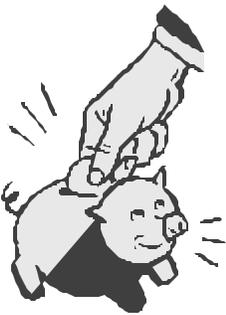
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## Thrift Savings Plan News

**C** Fund Posts Fifth Straight Strong Year Boosted by a 5.9 percent gain in December, the Thrift Savings Plan common stock (C) fund finished 1999 with a 20.95 percent gain, following increases of 37.41, 22.85, 33.17 and 28.44 percent from 1995 onward. The fund was not without some down months in 1999, there were five of them - four of which saw losses of more than 2 percent. Meanwhile, the bond (F) fund finished in the red during 1999, with a 0.85 percent loss following a drop of 0.45 percent in December. That fund had seven losing months in 1999. The government securities (G) fund, which by definition can never have a losing month, posted a 5.99 percent gain in December.

**G** Fund Rate, The Thrift Savings Plan government securities (G) fund is being invested at a 6.625 annual rate in January.