

## WHAT OUR READERS SAY

Best local paper ever. [I] have lived in seven states and never read the local newspaper till now. Love this paper and has helped us make a transition to our new home in Arizona. Thanks and keep up the good work. – Robert F.

Thanks to this wonderful newspaper, we will be visiting your bakery [The Bakery PHX] during the summer. We moved to Carefree a year and a half ago and use the paper to find new and interesting things to see, do and eat. Also, thanks for the recipe. – Loretta F.

## WHAT OUR ADVERTISERS SAY

I wanted to be sure to drop you all a note to share the incredible success that we have experienced as a direct result of advertising in your newspaper. We have seen a significant increase in calls, visits to our rock yard, a huge spike in people visiting our website, and sales and referrals from homeowners and contractors, with these folks each telling us they saw our ad in your paper.

So, first, advertising with you works! Second, it's very reasonable priced. Third, it clearly gets read. And, finally, every contact working with the paper, from the professional, talented creative designer to the advertising reps to the publisher has been a pleasure to work with. And, I even now enjoy reading each issue to read the articles and read the ads.

Keep up the great work! – Mark H. , We Rock AZ!, Inc

### WELCOME NEW ADVERTISERS

- Adela's Professional House Cleaning Services
- Arizona Animal Hospital
- Arizona High Country Campground
- Freedom Academy Charter School
- Kern Entertainment LLC
- Sunrise Ski Park
- Susan Clifford
- Whispering Pines Resort

### WELCOME BACK ADVERTISERS

- Carefree Salon
- Carpet Closeouts
- Casa Redonda TV Service
- Cave Creek Unified School District
- Fresh Vitamins, Inc.
- The Furniture Ranch
- Green N Lush RV Park
- Keystone Homes
- Law Office of Libby Banks, PLLC
- Llama Palooza Ranch
- Pine Meadows Country Club
- Pleasant Valley Winery
- Quality Discount Tile
- Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center

The latest TV commercial for the USPS is entitled "Watch Us Deliver." The voice over begins, "What do you think of when you think of the U.S. Postal Service?"

Do they *really* want to know?

Incompetence?

Beginning from the beginning. Stay with me.

Part of me is *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

The other part is as traditional as they come.

One part emails, texts and Facebooks. The

other likes receiving household bills via U.S.

Mail (*not* email), handwritten thank you

notes, formal table settings and gentlemen

holding doors open. Multiple personality

disorder? Perhaps. If that's the case, my traditional

side is uber protective of my modern side.

I am also a control freak. (Heavens! *Another* disorder.) Just ask those who know and love me. Included in my control freakiness is that I pay my bills on time. Myself. I *could* authorize automatic withdrawal (shudder). Leave my credit card on file (is this really secure?). Schedule payments through online banking and forget about it (not a chance). I do it the old-fashioned way: (1) receive bills via U.S. Mail; (2) pay by check, credit card, online banking; (3) keep a receipt. *My* choice. *My* control. *My* disorder.

I have paid all of our bills for 45 years of marriage. *On* or ahead of time. *Always*. Imagine my chagrin when LH goes online in "research" mode to evaluate our cable services to find that our account is "Past Due," there is a late fee assessed *and* if we don't pay up in less than a week our service will be interrupted. WHAT? He sends me an email with a snarky, yet affectionate note with something about it having been "...lost in one of your piles?" I *guess* it is possible (*not* probable, but *possible*) that the bill *was* misplaced. Doubtful. I turn my office upside down. No bill. Phone the cable provider. Advise I had never received the bill. Based on our history of *decades* of *never* having been late, they deduct the late charge.

Figured it was an oddity. Stuff happens.

Until...

Two days later I receive *two* current months' bills from yet *other* utilities. One states in bold letters at the very top: "DELINQUENT ACCOUNT." *Plus*, a late fee. The other more gently states, "Just a reminder, your usual timely payment has not been received." Yikes! I am mortified.

I can feel my blood pressure going up *again* as I recount this saga. Here goes:

**Friday 6/5. Afternoon:** I call the USPS, Hopi Station which services (loose use of term) our area. "The line is busy. For only seventy-five cents, CenturyLink will keep trying and immediately call you back when the line is no longer busy." (Guess we didn't owe *them* money.) I call repeatedly. Same message. I call the 800 number listed on the USPS website. A lovely lady listens to my story. She'll advise Hopi.

**Saturday 6/6. Evening:** Receive voicemail from Jane (name changed to protect the guilty) at Hopi Station at 2:40pm. On a Saturday. I'm impressed. Briefly.



**Monday 6/8. Morning:** Start calling at 8am. Repeatedly. Same "The line is busy..." message. 10:22am: It rings. Yay!

And rings. And rings. No answer.

Call again. A person answers. I

ask for Jane. "One moment,

please." I'm on "hold."

Recording: "Thank you

for calling. Please be

assured that your call will

be answered as quickly as

possible. Please continue

to hold for just a moment

longer. We will be on the line

shortly to answer your call." I

was able to write that thought verbatim as I was on "hold" with this loop for *fifty-five* minutes and counting. 11:18am: While continuing on hold, I call on my cell. Same person answers. At least *that's* consistent. I ask for Jane. Person will get her. I'm on "hold" now on *this* phone, too. Same recording. Stereo. I've now invested 59 minutes – not including the number of times I could not get through *at all*. Person says, "She's in a meeting. Can I have your number and she'll call you back?" You have *got* to be kidding. I was on so long I got lots done. Like paying the bills I *did* receive.

**Tuesday 6/9. All day:** Call on and off. Same busy message.

**Wednesday 6/10. All day:** Rings repeatedly. Perhaps they hadn't paid *their* phone bill?

This is getting old. I take a lonnnnnnnng break.

**Wednesday 6/17. Morning:** 10:45am: Busy. 10:46am: Rings. Forever. 10:49am: Person answers. I ask for the supervisor. On hold for *only* 17 minutes when Jane appears. I tell her my story. She'll have the supervisor for our address talk with the carrier. "I thought *you* were the supervisor." It *just keeps getting better*.

Lest you think it's *just* me: A friend "serviced" by the same station is in postal hell. (1) Mail was supposed to be held while on extended vacation. Wasn't. (2) Days after return received *all* of someone else's mail, neatly held by a rubber band plus three pieces of other misdelivered mail. (3) Getting lots of mail for other addresses. Her question: "If we're getting someone else's, who is getting ours?"

Making a yet longer (can you believe it?) story shorter: *Nothing* has yet been resolved.

Snail mail? How about *no* mail?

Does identity theft concern you? What about credit scores when bills are not received? Will the USPS bear that burden?

So much for tradition. Perhaps it's time for me to bite the bullet and opt *in* for receiving bills via email. Then they can be lost in cyberspace *instead* of at the USPS!

*Hope H. Ozer, founder and Publisher Emeritus of CITYSunTimes, is president of Phoenix Manhattan Group, LLC. Her columns range from personal – some humorous, some poignant – to observations on life.*