Documented Work Stress Patterns Implemented and Enforced:

How the Ongoing Violation of the Guiding Principles of the United States Postal Service is Creating a Toxic Work Environment

by

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A Thesis

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Introduction

The concept of the five Guiding Principles of the United States Postal Service being tried and found guilty of charges of corporate obstruction, is, at best, a reality difficult to swallow.

As stated in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, Chapter 8, Safety, Health and Environment, Section 811.23 , Guiding Principles:

"The guiding principles of the Postal Service are the following:

"a. People- Employees are our most valued resource. Our employees must be provided a safe and healthful workplace.

"b. Customers- When our employees work more safely, our performance improves.

"c. Excellence- We can demonstrate that management and employee attention to working safely is good business.

"d. Integrity- As a leader in occupational safety and health, we enhance our integrity with our customers, business partners and the Congress.

"e. Community Responsibilities- When our employees work safely, our customers are safer, and we lead other employers by example."

It is my intent, in choosing to write this thesis, to establish the links between the ongoing and increasing breeches of the above five principles by upper management in the U.S. Postal Service, due to sweeping policy changes in recent years, the resulting toxicity of the workplace environment in the U.S. Postal Service, and the ensuing mental and physical health and safety hazards this both creates and has created. The correlation between the quality of work environment and physical and mental health is already the subject of a multitudinous host of writings worldwide, from sources ranging from government agencies, managerial organizations and labor unions, to medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and university professors. This massive body of literature is founded upon the hard work, dedication and caring of indi viduals, whose ongoing, extensive research, some of which has been conducted over a period of decades, has brought to light the life-threatening effects of an increasingly stressful modern day work environment. It is my endeavor and my lifeblood, to tie in this research directly with the present day workplace practices of the U.S. Postal Service, detailing the manner in which the five Guiding Principles are being violated, and its repercussions, both cause and effect.

The rapid and unprecedented systemic deterioration of upper Management's practice of the core values upon which the United States Postal Service was founded, has eroded the conditions of the workplace to a dangerously substandard level, opening the way for the very real possibility of massive increases of employee illnesses, injuries and deaths in the very near future.

A clear measure has been established by the core values of the Postal Service, themselves, both by definition and by application. To understand their application, an in-depth examination of the wording of each of the five Guiding Principles is first essential.

Defining the Guiding Principles

The following word definitions, as applied to the Guiding Principles, are taken from The American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition, Copyright 1994, Houghton Mifflin Company:

"a. People- Employees are our most valued resource. Our employees must be provided a safe and healthful workplace."
    "Most": "adv. Superl[ative]. of much. 1. In or to the highest degree, quantity or
 extent."
     "Superlative": "1. Of the highest order, quality or degree." (In grammat-
 ical usage:) "Expressing or involving the extreme degree of comparison of an
 adjective or adverb."

   "Resource": "1. A source of support or help. 2. Often resources. An
  available supply. 3. The ability to deal with a situation effectively
  4. Often resources. Means; assets. 5. A natural re-source.
[<Lat. resurgere, rise again.]"
    "Support": root word: Latin: supportare, carry.

   "Safe": (root word) "[< Lat. salvus, healthy.]

Knowing that both perception and scope of the value placed by this Guiding Principle upon the employees of the U. S. Postal Service, can be surpassed

by no greater measure, gives one the sense of limitless bounds, both height and breadth, to infinity. It is the lifeblood of every great institution, which defines the foundations of its resources, from which its soundness arises, and without which its health and vitality are destroyed from within.

"b. Customers- When our employees work more safely, our performance improves."
    "Perform": "v. 1. To begin and carry through to completion; do. 2. To
  carry out; fulfill."
       "Performance": "Accomplishment."
         "Accomplishment": "Something completed successfully; achievement."

    "Improve": "1. To make or become better. 2. To increase the productivity
   or value of (property). [ME improwen, to enclose (land) for cultivation.]
        "Cultivate": "1. To improve and prepare (land) for raising crops. 2. To
   grow or tend (a plant or crop). 3. To foster. See Syns. at nurture. 4. To form
   and refine, as by education. 5. To seek the acquaintance or good will of."
        "Nurture": "n. 1. Something that nourishes. 2. Upbringing; rearing.
  –v. 1. To nourish; feed. 2. To educate; train. 3. To foster; cultivate."
          "Nourish": "v. 1. To provide with food or other substances necessary
   for life and growth. 2. To foster the development of; promote."
            "Foster" (root word) "[<OE fostor, food.]"

It is without question that the immeasurable quality outlined in the first Principle, by which the employees of the U. S. Postal Service are to be esteemed, defines the calibre of public service we render to those who both support us and who are supported by us. Indeed, for us to function as public servants, upon whom it is incumbent to nurture those entrusted into our keeping, it is, by this second Principle, all the more binding upon the Management of the Postal Service, to, on a continual basis, foster the well-being, and thus the cultivation, of its field of workers.

"c. Excellence- We can demonstrate that management and employee attention to working
safely is good business."

"Excellence": "The quality or condition of excelling; superiority."
"Excel": "To be superior to; surpass; outdo."

"Can": "aux. v. 1. Used to indicate: a. Physical or mental ability: I can
carry both suitcases. b. Possession of a power, right or privilege: The President
can veto bills. c. Possession of a capability or skill: I can tune a piano. 2. Used to
indicate: a. Possibility or probability: I wonder if I could be sick. b. That which is
permitted, as by conscience or feelings: I can hardly blame you for laughing.
3. Used to request or grant permission. [< OE cunnan know how.]

"Demonstrate": "v. 1. To show clearly and deliberately. 2. To show to
be true by reasoning or evidence. 3. To explain and illustrate. 4. To show
the use of (a product) to a prospective buyer."
"Clear": "adj. 1. Free from anything that dims, obscures or darkens.
2. Free from impediment; open. 3. Evident. See Syns at apparent. 4. Easily
perceptible; distinct. 5. Discerning or perceiving easily: a clear mind. 6. Free
from doubt or confusion. 7. Free from qualification or limitation. 8. Free
from burden, obligation or guilt. 9. Freed from contact or connection: clear
of the danger; clear of the reef."
"Deliberate": "adj. 1. Done with full consciousness of the effects;
intentional. 2. Marked by careful consideration. 3. Unhurried in action
or manner."
"True": "adj. 1.a. Consistent with fact or reality.; not false or erroneous.
b. Truthful. 2. Real; genuine. See Syns at authentic. 3. Reliable; accurate.
4. Faithful; loyal. 5. Sincerely felt or expressed. 6. Rightful; legitimate.
7. Exactly conforming to a rule, standard or pattern."

"Attention": "n. 1. Concentration of the mental powers upon an object.
2. Observant consideration; notice."

"Good": "Adj. 1. Being positive or desirable in nature. 3.a. Not spoiled.
b. In excellent condition; sound. 4. Superior to the average. 5.a. Of high
quality. b. Discriminating: good taste. 6. Beneficial; salutary. 7. Competent;
skilled. 8. Complete; thorough. 9.a. Reliable; sure. b. Valid or true.
10. In effect; operative. 11.a. Ample; substantial. b. Bountiful.
13.a. Pleasant; enjoyable. b. Favorable. 14.a. Virtuous; upright.
b. Benevolent; kind. 15. Well-behaved; obedient.

"Business": "4. Volume of commercial trade: Business had fallen off.
5. Patronage: took my business elsewhere.   6. One's concern or interest.
7. Serious work: got down to business. 8. An affair or matter."

Surpassing even the clarity of truth inherent in an institution who outrightly declares the health safety of both employees and customers to be its first water, is the affirmation both of the U.S. Postal Service's power, authority and ability to do so; and of its mandate to do so, for the reason that it is good to do so. "Good," as defined here: "10. In effect; operative," and as applied to the Guiding Principles, clearly denotes that without goodness, the U. S. Postal Service would cease to be operative in all affairs of business worthwhile.

"d. Integrity- As a leader in occupational safety and health, we enhance our integrity
with our customers, business partners and the Congress."

"Integrity": "n. 1. Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code.
2. Soundness. 3. Completeness; unity. [< Lat. integer, whole.]"

"Lead": "v. 1. To guide, conduct, escort or direct.

"Enhance": v. To make greater, as in value, reputation, or

usefulness. [< LLat. inaltare, heighten.]

The body of public servants, known as the U. S. Postal Service, wholly comprising the head and all its many parts, when operating jointly with soundness and integrity, will likewise promote the health and well-being of all with whom it comes in contact. It will, being built in virtue, impart virtue to other leaders with positions of authority, to business owners with whom we have dealings, and to all the people we serve. Through our policy of directing and enriching the lives and the leaderships of others, we will continue to reap our own rewards on every possible level. This fourth Principle stresses the utmost importance of being a leader among leaders, as an ever-present, availing yardstick, with which others can measure their own affairs.

"e. Community Responsibilities- When our employees work safely, our customers are   safer, and we lead other employers by example."

"Community": "n. 4. Society as a whole."

"Responsible": "adj. 1. Liable to be required to give account for
something. 2. Involving personal accountability: a responsible position.
3. Being a source or cause. 4. Dependable; reliable."

"Example": "n. 1. One that is representative of a group as a whole. 2. One
 serving as a pattern of a specific kind. 3. One that serves as a warning or
 deterrent."
"Pattern": "n. 1.a. A model or an original used as an archetype. b. A person
 or thing considered worthy of imitation. 2. A plan, diagram or model to be
 followed in making things. 3. A representative sample, specimen or ideal. 4. An
 artistic or decorative design. 5. A composite of traits or features.
 [< OFr. patron PATRON]"
"Patron" : "n. 1. One that supports, protects, or champions someone
 or something; sponsor or benefactor. 2. A customer,

esp. a regular customer.
 [Lat. patronus < pater, father.]"

It is only through the prioritizing of caring leaders within the U. S. Postal Service, of the health and well-being of their employees, that the Postal Service will positively impact the community at large. If a father tends not for those of his own household, neither will he care for his neighbors nor for the environment.

In conclusion, the five Guiding Principles of the United States Postal Service are bound together by one, unifying precept: that caring for one's own employees is an imperative of the greatest worth, without which all other works, writings and speeches become 'seeds cast by the wayside' (The Bible).

Current Upper Management Practices and Violation of the Guiding Principles: Which Came First?

In most given situations, when a person commits an infraction, it is generally and tersely regarded, with a common sense approach, as an act which, upon being committed, then and only then become a violation of the law, or of organizational or societal rules. Rarely will a police officer ponder over the wherefores of a car parked on the wrong side of the street, or the motives of the driver running a red light. A judge will not ask whether said driver planned well ahead of time to be at that intersection at that given date and time, to run the red light.

In the case of the violations on the part of upper Management of the U. S. Postal Service against craft employees, both in an outward sense and by the wording of the standard labor unions' grievance forms, the acts being grieved are always listed first as the reason for the grievance, and are then supported by the chapter and verse of the labor contract for the respective craft whose representative(s) has filed said grievance. The grievant, ordinarily, has not the legal wherewithal, and indeed it would be highly damaging on his

or her part, to attempt to establish intent on the part of Management to violate said article of the contract, which subsequently led said Management to commit the infraction. It would be accusatory, bellicose and inflammatory at best.

On the other side of the equation, if it were so, if it were of a truth, that said Management did, in fact, first despise and find contempt against a Postal standard (or standards), and then, after first expending time and money seeking opportunity against it, successfully implemented a policy or policies against said standard(s); which, governed by self-will, led to numerous and escalating violations of said standard(s); which, in turn, put the health and safety of postal employees at risk; it would then be equally binding upon an elected union official or steward, upon learning of the resulting cause and effects cycle brought about by the initial intent to overthrow and abolish said standard(s), to bring this to light in exactly this manner, with supporting documentation. To fail to do so would be tantamount to a firefighter hosing down a gasoline fire.

On July 16, 2008, The American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO filed a lawsuit against the President of the United States, George W. Bush, and against the Postmaster General, John E. Potter, in the form of a writ of mandamus: a court order which compels, in most cases, a government official, or lower court, to adhere to an existing law or statute, of which he (she, it) is found to be in violation.
This writ charges President Bush and Postmaster General Potter with failure to establish a Postal Advisory Council, which is mandated by law. It reads, in part:

"16. Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented, 39 U.S.C. §206 provides, in pertinent part:
"(a) There shall be a Postal Service Advisory Council of which the Postmaster General
shall be the Chairman and the Deputy Postmaster General shall be the Vice Chairman.
The Advisory Council shall have II additional members appointed by the President. He
shall appoint as such members
"(I) 4 persons from among persons nominated by those labor organizations recognized   as collective-bargaining representatives for employees of the Postal Service in one or   more collective-bargaining units,

"(2) 4 persons as representatives of major mail users, and
"(3) 3 persons as representatives of the public at large. All members shall be appointed   for terms of 2 years except that, of those first appointed, 2 of the members representative   of labor organizations, 2 of the members representative of major postal users, and 1   member representing the public at large shall be appointed for 1 year. Any member   appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which his   predecessor was appointed shall serve for the remainder of such term.
"(b) The Postal Service shall consult with and receive the advice of the Advisory   Council regarding all aspects of postal operations.

"17. The Postal Service Advisory Council has not been created and the President has made no appointments to the Council. The USPS has not consulted with, or received advice from, the Council.
"18. By failing and refusing to create the Council and to appoint its members, the President has failed to perform a non-discretionary duty required by Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented.
"19. By failing and refusing to perform his duties with respect to creation of the Council and appointment of its members, the Postmaster General has failed to perform a nondiscretionary duty required by Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented.
"20. By failing and refusing to ensure that the USPS has consulted with, and received advice from the Council, the Postmaster General has failed to perform a non-discretionary duty required by Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented.
"Other parties interested in postal operations, particularly large mailers whose interests are often adverse to those of the postal unions and postal workers, and whose financial interests are often adverse to those of the Postal Service, have an avenue to consult with and provide advice to the Postal Service about postal operations through participation in organizations that are members of the Mailers Technical Advisory Council ("MTAC"). APWU has attempted to become a member of MTAC and to participate in MTAC proceedings, but such attempts were rebuffed by the USPS and MTAC. APWU's legal challenge to the USPS and MTAC denial of APWU membership in MTAC and

participation in MTAC proceedings was dismissed.
"24. APWU and its members have been substantially harmed by the failure and refusal of President Bush and the Postmaster General to perform their non-discretionary duties under Section 206 of the PRA. The failure of the defendants to establish the Council, appoint its members and arrange for the USPS to receive advice from the Council and to consult with the Council, including four union-nominated members, as required by Section 206 has denied, and is denying, the APWU and the employees it represents the right to have union-nominated members of the Council give advice to and consult with the USPS about "aspects of postal operations" that have a direct bearing on the employment and welfare of postal employees represented by the APWU. Among "aspects of postal operations" that affect postal workers that should have been, and should be, the subjects of advice from the Council and USPS consultation with the Council are: technological changes contemplated by the Postal Service; USPS network realignments; changes to USPS mail processes including as to receipt, sortation and delivery of the mail; staffing and employee complement and utilization decisions such as the decision to reduce employment through offers of early retirement and the terms on which such offers would be made; changes in postal rules and processes advocated by other interested parties; and economic and structural challenges faced by the USPS.

"25. This Court has jurisdiction under the Mandamus Act to compel defendants to perform their non-discretionary duties pursuant to Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented.

REQUEST FOR RELIEF

"WHEREFORE, APWU respectfully asks this Court to:

"A. DECLARE that the President has failed to perform non-discretionary duties required by Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented by failing and refusing to create the Council and to appoint its members.

"B. DECLARE that the Postmaster General has failed and refused to perform nondiscretionary duties with respect to creation of the Council and appointment of its members and with respect to ensuring that the USPS has consulted with, and received advice from the Council, as required Section 206 of the Postal Reorganization Act as amended and supplemented.

"C. ORDER the President to perform his duty by creating the Council and appointing its members.

"D. ORDER the Postmaster General to perform his duty with respect to creation of the Council and appointment of its members, and with respect to ensuring that the USPS consults with and receives advice from the Council.

"E. GRANT such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper."

Taking note of events prior to this, which both laid the foundations of, and enabled the policies of upper Management to be animated, including, but not limited to, their preference towards the Mailers Technical Advisory Council over the lawfully required Postal Service Advisory Council, gives further insight into the underbelly of the workings, which were already in the formative stages as early as 2001:
"On April 4, 2001, David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the United States, advised the House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform that the Postal Service `faces major challenges that collectively call for a structural transformation if it is to remain viable in the 21st century.'' He called on the Postal Service, in conjunction with all stakeholders, to prepare a comprehensive plan identifying ``the actions needed to address the Service's financial, operational, and human capital challenges and establish a time frame and specify key milestones for achieving positive results.'' On April 24, 2001, Mr. Bernard L. Ungar, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, U.S. General Accounting Office, wrote to former Postmaster General William J. Henderson formally recommending that the Postal Service develop such a comprehensive plan. On June 14, 2001, following Mr. Walker's testimony before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs on May 15, 2001, the chair and ranking members of the committee and its Postal Oversight Subcommittee wrote to Postmaster General John E. Potter endorsing the Comptroller General's recommendation and asking for the plan by the end of calendar year 2001. On July 25, 2001, Postmaster General Potter advised Congress that the Postal Service agreed to prepare a Comprehensive Transformation Plan, as requested." -[Federal Register: October 9, 2001 (Volume 66, Number 195)] [Notices] [Page 51480-51481], Request for Comments on an Outline for Discussion: Concepts for Postal Transformation.

The resulting document of over one hundred

pages, The United States Postal Service Transformation Plan was completed in April, 2002. Within its pages are documented the prior work force reduction of 21,000 career employees, which 'improved productivity.' (Section 2–Meeting the Challenge, Page 11.) (Excerpts from Section 2, next page). Even so, this was deemed not sufficient. "The most sweeping organizational changes in ten years" would result in "streamlining" both Administrative offices and the Postal Service as a whole.

Page 14 of Section 2expands upon the concept of cutting costs through systematically and calculatedly discouraging "Simple Transactions." The language of the document clearly conveys the message, through setting forth statistics and strategy both, that in the sight of the Upper Management of the U.S. Postal Service, the "little guy" with his meager means making his lowly purchases is neither useful nor profitable, and therefore has not been judged worthy to enter the doors of the local Post Office. His menial purchase of one postage stamp, for which he spends a great deal of time standing in line, yes, his very existence within the lobby is costing the Postal Service more than what he is worth. Better it would be, to politely edge him out as one to be placed in more "appropriate" locations that would generate more revenue, and cast the Guiding Principles of customer and community responsibility and nurturing to the curb, as an impediment to big business.

In the words of the Transformation Plan, page 17:
"As simple transactions are redirected to lower cost alternatives, post offices will scale down staffing and concentrate resources on more complex, higher-margin business. Offices will handle these transactions more efficiently by improving staff scheduling, converting to a more flexible workforce, collecting and using better data on customer traffic and transactions mix, and setting and meeting post office-level productivity targets.
"Shifting simple transactions away from counters provides an opportunity to concentrate on the needs of many retail customers, especially businesses. Select offices with high concentrations of business customers will be converted to business service centers."

A Message Summary dated March 19, 2008, printed out at the clerk's start of day from the POS terminal, reads (photocopy of actual printout next page):

"Subject: Defining Great Customer Service"
"Summary: Customers expect and deserve professional, courteous and timely service. they also have a choice of shipping carriers. So ask yourself, "Would a customer choose to ship with me over a competitor? How you treat a customer today determines whether he or she will come back tomorrow. "
"Msg 09114-080319 Number: Priority: General"

In light of the Transformation Plan quotation, the meaning of the term "customer" is now called into question.

In December 2002, President Bush created the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service. The function of this office was to make thorough examination of the structural workings of the Postal Service, and to make recommendations concerning operational and financial constraints, for steps taken, in their words, "To ensure the long-term viability of postal service in the United States."
The nine-member Commission was comprised solely of appointees of President Bush.

The Mission Statement, taken from President Bush's Executive Order: President's Commission on the United States Postal Service, dated December 11, 2002, reads:
"Sec. 3. Mission. (a) The mission of the Commission shall be to examine the state of the United States Postal Service, and to prepare and submit to the President a report articulating a proposed vision for the future of the United States Postal Service and recommending the legislative and administrative reforms needed to ensure the viability of postal services.
1. "(b) In fulfilling its mission, the Commission shall consider the following issues and such other issues relating to the Postal Service as the Commission determines appropriate:
"(i) the role of the Postal Service in the 21st century and beyond;
"(ii) the flexibility that the Postal Service should have to change prices, control costs, and adjust service in response to financial, competitive, or market pressures;
"(iii) the rigidities in cost or service that limit the efficiency of the postal system;
"(iv) the ability of the Postal Service, over the long term, to maintain universal mail delivery at affordable rates and cover its unfunded liabilities with minimum exposure to the American taxpayers;
"(v) the extent to which postal monopoly restrictions

continue to advance the public interest under evolving market conditions, and the extent to which the Postal Service competes with private sector services; and "(vi) the most appropriate governance and oversight structure for the Postal Service."

The President's Commission was a temporary office, mandated to submit its final report "Not later than July 31, 2003," whereupon, it was given thirty days from that date, through August 30, to terminate. The Commission's final report, dated July 31, 2008, is a 208-page document entitled: Embracing The Future: Making the Tough Choices to Preserve Universal Mail Service.

The cover letter addressed to President Bush, contains five paragraphs, which expand upon their view of the business model of the Postal Service, as it was in early 2003, as being "outdated and inflexible (paragraph 2)," and lay blame solely upon this as being the impediment to the fiscal health and "vitality" of the institution, due to rising internet usage and "a rapidly changing postal landscape."

Paragraph four reads as follows:
"Our recommendations aim to tailor the Postal Service to the modern mail needs of the country and focus the institution on "best execution" in all aspects of its operations. It is our hope that a revitalized 21st century Postal Service—one that makes best use of every resource it has and takes full advantage of private-sector partnerships and new technologies—can serve as a prime example of how to enhance the quality and cost effectiveness of operations throughout the Federal government."

While appearing to furnish an arguably strong cause for the Postal Commission's having been brought to birth in the first place: that trends having already been set in motion, including a projected steady year-by-year decline in First Class mail volume, posed a very real threat to the continued existence of this great institution as we know it; and that the role of the 2002 Postal Commission, therefore, was to promote decisive and incisive action before it would be too late to take any action at all; what becomes more apparent, both in the pages to follow and in their practice, is that, in reality, the economic stability of the U. S. Postal Service bears cosmetic relevance to the intent behind the "sweeping reforms" which were brought about and continue to gather speed in a downward

spiral.

Page viii, entitled Universal Post Office Is at Risk, reads, in part:
"Unless Postal Service expenses can be similarly reduced, it is questionable whether affordable universal mail service via a self-financing public institution is sustainable.

"With its debt reaching destabilizing levels and its traditional revenue streams in retreat, the Postal Service's transformational efforts and long-term outlook were placed on the U.S. General Accounting Office's "high-risk list" in 2001. At the request of Congress, the Postal Service began developing its Transformation Plan to adapt to the future. Since the Plan's release in April of 2002, the Postal Service has reduced its workforce by more than 40,000 career positions and will deliver $2.5 billion in annual cost savings by September 30, 2003. However, even with this substantial progress, it is quite possible that the Postal Service will experience significant (and rapidly ballooning) deficits within just a few years' time, even if stamp prices continue to rise with inflation. This prospect points to the urgent need for a far more sweeping set of reforms.

"Even if the Postal Service were not in financial jeopardy, however, the inefficiency of its operations and legacy network today causes billions of dollars in unnecessary costs that should be eliminated rather than passed on to ratepayers. Far more emphasis must be placed on restoring fiscal stability not by ratcheting up rates or scaling back service, but by aggressively rooting out inefficiencies throughout the Postal Service."

It is through this last paragraph, complete with the adverb: "aggressively" woven among the threads forming the new clothes of the Emperor, that the underlying motivation surfaces, before being buried, once again, in talk of a financial quagmire: it has been the intent of the current Upper Management of the United States Postal Service, from the beginning, to "aggressively root out" all they deem unprofitable to the concept of postal incorporation, and therefore "inefficient."

The first five "inefficiencies" to go, it therefore can be concluded, are the five Guiding Principles:
"a. People- Employees are our most valued resource. Our employees must be provided a safe and healthful workplace."
 (The workforce and work hours are to be cut back indiscriminately, and at any sacrifice.)
"b. Customers- When our employees work more

safely, our performance improves."

(Declaring the person with the simple transaction void, and redefining the meaning of the term "customer" to be synonymous with financial profitability, provides tailor-made customers who perform for us, not the other way around.)

"c. Excellence- We can demonstrate that management and employee attention to working safely is good business.

(The example of virtuous leadership is obsolete, and to be replaced with the "example" of "lean management.")

"d. Integrity- As a leader in occupational safety and health, we enhance our integrity with our customers, business partners and the Congress."

(Being a corporate model and partnering with big business is our targeted goal, necessitating our deployment of means, at any cost, to eradicate any trace of integrity which stands in our way. This includes, but is not limited to, our replacing the Postal Advisory Council, a requirement stated in the Postal Reorganization Act, "as amended and supplemented by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act [an act of Congress]", with the Mailers Technical Advisory Council; and thus redefining the term "partner" in "business partner".)

"e. Community Responsibilities- When our employees work safely, our customers are safer, and we lead other employers by example."

(The only example we seek to demonstrate is our corporate prowess before our recognized elite community of influential business leaders. We take no responsibility for the manner in which other employers treat their employees, as a result of their perceiving us as an example : that is entirely their affair.)

The Fruit that 'Fell Not Far from the Tree'

It is here that the manner in which the events and decisions above have been implemented in the workplace, is explored, including structural and behavioral changes which have occurred, and which are occurring at present, and the outlook this has created as a whole.

I am a sales and distribution clerk in a medium-sized carrier station in Brooklyn, N.Y., 11208. I have been in my current position, at the New Lots

Station, since August of 1997.

The general atmosphere for the first five years, was to be described as one of the best work experiences. Normalcy, in terms of the New Lots Station, meant that every few days, on the average, a supervisor or a craft employee would bring donuts, cookies, cake or candy to the station.

At Christmastime, parties were held, gifts exchanged, our supervisor held trivia contests with prizes, and our customers showered upon us an abundance of homemade cake, gourmet cookies and sugared almonds.

Just before Thanksgiving, supervisors and employees alike contributed homemade prepared dishes, or cakes and pie to the station feast.

Time was freely given us to make preparations, as needed, for summer cookouts, which became a ritual held outside on the platform, attended by all. The station manager and the employees took turns manning the grills. Dancing and street games lasted until after dark. No one desired to leave early.

On Mother's Day, the clerks would collect funds to hold a special party for our supervisor.

On occasion, Management would remember us with an abundance of bagels with cream cheese and butter, simply to thank us all for our service as postal employees, rather than to create a performance/reward system.

As a rule, clerks and carriers were allowed enough time, to complete their work assignments with a sense of thoroughness and dedication. I was the C.F.S. (Computer Forwarding System) clerk, and was given the time it took to properly treat and verify the mail being sent downtown to the clerks, who then would key in the last three digits of the address number, and the first four letters of the last name on each envelope, magazine or parcel, to generate a yellow label showing the new mailing address, which then was affixed to the piece of mail. Management gave me an award for my service in keeping our error rate below 5 percent on a consistent basis.

We sang as we worked, sometimes in chorus.

Before working in New Lots Station, I was employed at the Metro-Bushwick Station, also in Brooklyn. One holiday season, I was instructed by management to arrive two hours ahead of my nine o'clock tour, at time-and-a-half pay, in order to set up and decorate the lobby Christmas tree, and trim the

windows as well.

It was shortly into the Millenium, that the Brooklyn Postmaster began habitually visiting the stations, calling the employees together in a large group to address them. At the same time, the area Vice President consistently wrote articles in our Metro-area newsletter.

The speeches and the articles were always the same. First Class Mail volumes were declining, and the outlook was bleak at best. Necessary cutbacks were coming. At no time were employees asked for input, as to constructive, positive ideas on how to save what was painted to us as a sinking ship. We came away with the vision of a clouded horizon.

A little later on, the impending cutbacks materialized into definite or likely time frames.

A new manager and a new supervisor, by this time, had taken over the station positions. But more importantly, a new breed of management had entered throughout the entire U. S. Postal Service, a school of hierarchal thought which considered employee feedback counterproductive and irrelevant, save the "appropriate" Voice of the Employee questionnaires, a cut and dry survey which did not stress individual ideas.

At that time, there were twenty clerks employed, between New Lots Station and her sister station Cypress Retail Station.

One day, we were called, a few clerks at a time, into the manager's office, where the manager and supervisor both took turns addressing us.

They told us that people were coming from a department called Function 4, who would examine us very closely, assess our volume and pace of working, and determine whether we needed as many clerks at our station, or whether clerks would be excessed out and sent to other locations. "We are taking away your minutes," the manager and supervisor said. 'Every time you step off and drink coffee, every time you go out to move your car, that's time we're taking back from you, and counting as idle time.'

They said that in order for us to all try to maintain our clerk jobs at the New Lots Station, we would need to work very swiftly when Function 4 came, like lightning, or they would take clerks away from our station. I had spoken with the manager in private, after that, and had stressed the human aspects of sipping coffee and eating while working. His response was that this was wasteful timewise, and that he had seen me do this as well. "Things are going to get ugly," he said. We were to busy ourselves every minute we were on

the clock, from hereon in; to make sure to find available work to perform. If we stopped working at any time, we would be placed on standby time (meaning time that an employee is idle, for which he is paid, but which goes on record and is counted for the purpose of downsizing).

With great suddenness, like a clap of thunder, the joyousness was gone, and the words of the songs sputtered in our throats, and died.

The supervisors stood over us in an intimidating manner when we worked, and did not turn away.

The same postmaster returned for a visit, one morning. He and I had always gotten along well with one another, with an atmosphere of mutual respect. That morning, I waited for a couple minutes by the time clock to begin my tour, while the postmaster was nearby. Then, as soon as I had clocked in, he approached me very rapidly with a customer's mail pickup notice in his hand and shoved it at me almost violently. "Here," he said. His manner was very fierce.

Fear, anxiety and cut-throating abounded. Clerks turned against clerks, and workers became in trouble with supervisors. Clerks tried to grab work to do for themselves before another clerk would find it.

Then we were put on standby time. In spite of our having been assured that no one would be placed on standby time so long as we were gainfully employed, we were nonetheless forced from our work assignments, and sent to go on standby time.

I myself had been distributing small parcels, when a supervisor approached me, who told me to stop working and to go on standby time. I was outraged because they had not told us the truth.

While the New Lots Station clerks took turns going on standby time for half an hour each, the clerks from the Cypress Retail Station clerks were sent, on a one-by-one rotation, over to the New Lots Station and made to stay in the basement lunch area for a full eight-hour day on standby time. They sat, depressed and displaced, like the homeless who languish on park benches, reading newspapers and falling asleep.

Then Function 4 came.

They stayed for approximately three days. We had been told that they wouldn't ask us any questions. But they asked us all a host and a variety of questions, each one carefully calculated, and beyond our scope of knowledge as to their intended application.

Seven clerks were excessed out of our stations comprising twenty clerks.

Everybody started blaming everybody, and there was

more clerk infighting.

Five clerks were directly excessed out at the time. Then one more clerk took a bid out of our station, and another clerk transferred to Florida, neither position of which was posted as a vacancy.

After the clerks were gone, supervisors continued to stand over us, and rush us through our work assignments. The mail was hastily thrown together in the General Mail Facility, and sent to us in the morning. In the afternoon, the mail was hastily thrown together and sent out again. What used to be careful handling of the mails had now become disregard and disrespect for "the sanctity of the mails."

I watched as the C.F.S. case where I had formerly worked was removed. No more time was there, to manually verify with the aforementioned pride and sense of accomplishment, the mail to be forwarded to customers who had moved. Machines had been brought in at the General Mail Facility, with high-tech optical scanners that read the old mailing addresses and plucked out which ones had a change of address order on file, after which entire trays filled with rejected C.F.S. letters were returned to the station, reflecting a huge rate of error.

A new postmaster came to Brooklyn. His desire was to remove the chairs from off the retail window screenline, because, in his estimation, the clerks were too idle sitting down and would work more efficiently, standing. The union was successful in preventing this from taking place, due to the health and safety factors involved.

The atmosphere was oppressive, and was filled with sorrow and discontent. The infighting continued. Screaming and yelling were commonplace. The letter carriers were called down and intimidated. The letter case for the carrier shop steward was removed from its place, which is in numerical sequence, and which is located at a more remote section of the work floor. It was exchanged with the carrier case closest to the supervisor's desk, because the supervisor alleged that it was necessary for the carrier who was the shop steward to be more closely monitored. The E. E. O. (Equal Employment Opportunity) office was brought into the station more than once, concerning differing incidents.

In spite of this, our station craft employees tried to fight against the atmosphere of hostility, by seeking to maintain a spirit of camaraderie. We continued for a while to hold cookouts (no longer attended by Management even though we were still amicable so as to invite them) and parties. But the spirit was marred by heavy hearts. The atmosphere still was explosive on the work floor, and highly angry employees were uttering profanities.

The supervisor who had been the primary cause of the E. E. O. having visited our station, was removed to another station.

Towards the end of 2007, Function 4 returned. By this time, another manager had been assigned to the New Lots Station for a while. Every manager who came though our station was schooled at the same management meetings and training sessions, to wage what was perceived to be an all-out war against craft employees. The sessions bore the earmarks of indoctrination; managers and supervisors would emerge from behind the closed doors and behave the worse towards us for it.

Even so, this manager fought for the clerks' jobs. He was determined to set out to prove that we were working hard and that excessing more clerks out was unnecessary. We also had, this time around, another union president for the Brooklyn A. P. W. U., who was more adept in fighting in our behalf, than had been the previous president.

Although I was not a shop steward yet, I approached my fellow clerks, with our shop steward present, and spoke from pure instinct. "We shouldn't go killing ourselves," I was emphatic. "Because then they will think we can keep performing at this pace, and they'll have another excuse to cut us down. Do the same work you always do."

The shop steward and the clerks all concurred. The manager gave each clerk a chart, and instructed us to write in detail everything we did, and the time of day.

This time, no clerks were excessed out of New Lots Station, nor anywhere else in Brooklyn. A vacancy was created to add one clerk to the New Lots Station staff. However, Function 4 changed our tour hours somewhat. It seemed innocent enough at the time. The union signed off on it. So did we individually, out of necessity, lest we would become unassigned and be moved anywhere.

There had been and still was an abundance of overtime because after the clerk excessing there was sometimes too much work for the clerks to complete in eight, even ten hours of work. Clerks were many times working more than ten hours a day and six days a week. Some enjoyed the overtime, but others became

exhausted. Much of the overtime was mandatory. Time limits were imposed upon us. We were told how long it should take us to accept a passport, how long it should take to distribute a tray of mail, how many minutes it should take per customer transaction. The demeanor of Management towards us instilled in clerks a feeling of impending discussions and writeups if we did not consistently meet these expectations.

The charted time constraints are products, in part, of a highly sophisticated computer program, the WOS (Window Operation Survey) which cost the U. S. P. S. over $500,000,000.00 to implement and maintain (ICF International, Performance Management, Cost/Benefit Identification and Assessment, Point of Service (POS) ONE, USPS). (Printout of literature, next page.)

A webcam surveillance program is also in effect in the station lobbies, monitored by Management at all times, both in-station and remotely, to time clerk transactions and to view the length of time between transactions. Most times, there were only two clerks on the window at the start of the day, and the line was extremely long. Very irate customers complained to management, who did nothing, due to short staffing. The other clerks were in the back area, sorting mail to give to the carriers, who likewise were given a deadline for when to leave the building and be on the street.

Everything had become geared to cost-cutting. The customers suffered and we suffered under the strain of it.

Then it suddenly became worse.

It took another five months, give or take, for the new clerk tour schedule to take effect. By this time it was the spring of 2008, and we, once again, had a new manager.

Before this, our union had negotiated with management and what seemed like a miracle occurred. All the clerks, nationwide, were given a pay level increase, which resulted, for most of us, in a raise of c. 2.5 percent. The carriers had received the same pay raise a few years ago.

The scheduled raise was synchronous with the new Function 4 schedule.

Then all at once, with no prior warning, our overtime was severely cut. Clerks rarely, if at all, were brought in on their non-scheduled days. Ten hours was the maximum. No penalty overtime was given except in extreme cases.

In essence, we were expected to perform the same amount of work in less time. Little in any allowance was given for sickness, vacation or emergency. If one

clerk was absent, he or she would rarely be replaced. The Saturday before Easter, the line resembled that of the Christmas holidays. No clerks were brought in that day for their sixth day. The area manager, who was present in the station that day, remarked: 'It's busy, because of Easter.'

The day before the Fourth of July holiday, two clerks were non-scheduled, and it was a third clerk's holiday day. Management had planned to bring in the holiday clerk (at straight time), but when I reminded them, as shop steward, that the clerk on the overtime desired list, whose day off it was, had first rights (at time-and-a-half), it was decided by Management, that no one would be brought in. The result was a horrendously long line and overwork brought upon the clerks who came in that day.

The policy of the new manager, whose marching orders are incisively handed down to him from those of higher rank, is to expect the work to be finished no matter the conditions or circumstances, and in less time.

The letter carriers, in times past, who had overtime on their routes, oftentimes would return to the stations at six and six-thirty at night. The carrier's window of operation is now five o'clock.

On a day of a heavy snowstorm this past winter, a carrier was near tears: he appeared as though he were apt to break down in front of me. He said that he was exhausted, that they expected him to be back by five and doing the same work it had taken him until six or six-thirty to do before.

I addressed the issue of work-related stress, particularly concerning the letter carriers, with a person in management, although I am a shop steward to the clerk craft. His response was as follows: 'Our station was not efficient before and had fallen into bad habits.' "It's always painful to break bad habits."

I then pointed out the guiding principles of the U.S. Postal Service, with emphasis upon the first: "Employees are our most valued resource."

"Resource," he stressed. "Resource."

He also emphasized that stress is also caused by outside factors, and not solely due to workplace conditions.

This outlook reflects the managerial practice of measuring employees' capacity for stressful workplace situations, by a zero external stress factor: if an employing is suffering from marital problems, and cannot bear up under stressful work conditions, then he is not fit for duty.

While it is already established that some people suffer situations in their lives which are recognized as more stressful than the circumstances endured by others, in reality, no one can truthfully make the boast of having a zero-stress existence outside of the workplace. In a world where we all share the common denominators of illness, loss of loved ones, disagreements with others, physical injuries, regrets over mistakes made, and the pain of seeing friends and loved ones suffer, no one is immune to stress.

To therefore implement workplace practices based on a stress-free outside life, sets unrealistic goals for workers, causing them to shoulder the blame for any negative reaction.

"What you are doing is dangerous," I warned the manager.

A clerk was told it was taking too long for her to do a detail by a supervisor, because she was being thorough.

I was expected to perform a job which normally takes around two hours, in one hour's time and was sharply interrogated as to why I didn't finish. I was told that when the other clerk was performing the detail, there was no problem with her: only when I did it. When I pointed out that the other clerk had arrived earlier to that detail, the line of interrogation shifted to why I hadn't arrived there earlier (which was because I had been performing another detail.)When I respectfully "told my superior off", my superior threatened to knuckle down on the other clerks, necessitating my defending them with the language of a shop steward. After that, my superior became angry and would not speak to me the next day.

At that time, we were so short-staffed, that, toward the close of day, clerks would run to do mail dispatch, head for the registry, where they would take the keys and accountable (registered, certified, Express) mail from the 32 carriers and the four drivers, and log each piece in, then run back to the window again to wait on customers.

Along the chain of command, station managers and supervisors are literally yelled at by higher-ups who are intimidating and harassing towards them. This of course is being passed down to the employees.

It was around this Easter past, that I contacted our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) program anonymously, via their toll-free hot line, and reached one of the operators, to whom I related most of the above concerning the condition of our station and how it had changed so drastically over the years. It was my intention to learn what, if anything, I could do, as a shop steward, in the way of tapping upon available resources, to assist in preventing a terrible tragedy from occurring, as it seemed inevitable to me that without intervention, someone would become sick or injured, or would succumb to death.

"Oh my God," was the EAP operator's reaction. "Oh my God. Let me connect you to a counselor."

When the counselor took the call, I related the story once more. "Oh my God," she echoed the operator who had initially taken the call. "Oh my God. Is anyone . . . that you know of . . . is anyone using drugs or alcohol? Is anyone beating his wife?"

A local EAP counselor, upon the same account of the work place practices, pointed out that I could research the subject of work-related stress, on my own.

From what I have been told by our local union officials, New Lots Station is considered one of the better stations, in terms of Management's treatment of craft employees.

On Tuesday, April 15, 2008, around two weeks from when I had spoken with the local EAP counselor, I was at home, on my day off from work. The telephone rang in the afternoon, and the familiar voice of one of my clerk co-workers asked me if I had heard the news.

I had learned of a mishap which had befallen our manager, the day before: his vehicle had been vandalized and burglarized both, and I expressed my commiseration towards him to my coworker.

"No," my co-worker stopped me. "No. Listen to me: . . . Bob is dead. Big Bob. He committed suicide. He's gone."

"Please," I begged him. "Tell me that you didn't just say this."

Roberto Caballero was a letter carrier for 24 years. He was a man esteemed by the community which he served, who, in performing his postal duties, was the embodiment of the spirit of the Guiding Principles. His conscientious, caring manner touched upon the poor people in the housing projects across the street from our station, so deeply, that they took from the money they had not, and contributed each one ten dollars to rent buses to carry them from Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, to Washington Heights, Manhattan, to

attend Bob's wake. Afterwards, for days, they maintained burning candles in his memory, in the hallways of the building projects.

In our station, Bob, or "Big Bob" as many called him due to his tall stature, had been as permanent a fixture as the building itself: ever present, rarely absent except on his days off. A deep thinker, who reflected continually about God, life and current events, his conversations with co-workers were never mundane.

Besides his job with the Postal Service, Bob also had employment with the New York City Transit Authority. Out of the money he earned, his greatest joy was to care for his elderly parents who reside still in Manhattanville, which is in northern Manhattan. On that sorrowful day, when he was visiting his parents, Bob encountered two criminals in the building hallway who, as the story was related in the news media, were threatening to "rough up" his mother. Bob pulled out a gun and shot both criminals. One died, the other was seriously injured.

When the police arrived, Bob retreated into the apartment of the two people he loved the most, where he turned the gun upon himself, fatally wounding himself in the head.

The following is taken from one of the accounts in the New York Daily News, April 17, 2008:"Postal Inspector Al Weissmann said there was nothing in Caballero's 24-year record as a postman to indicate he had a problem.

"He was responsible, timely and efficient on his route," Weissmann said. "That's why we're overly perplexed here."

I had remarked to one of the carriers, that "It couldn't be because management was riding Bob's back. Not Bob. Everybody left Bob alone to do his thing."

"Oh no they didn't," the carrier replied. "He was in a big fight with management, because they wanted him to do other routes after he finished his own. He said he wasn't going to do it, and there was an argument."

A little longer than three months from Bob's death, in the middle of July, 2008, another carrier was found dead in his home. The cause of his death has not been told me, however, it is believed that he passed away due to a heart attack. He had been dead for two days when he was found.

Peter had only been a carrier for a few weeks

in the New Lots Station, having newly transferred from another station. He was in his fifties. A co-worker related to me, that on his last day on the job, the outdoor temperature having been around ninety degrees or above, Peter had appeared unwell, and had said that the heat was getting to him.

While, at this time, there is no substantial evidence, save the argument Bob had with Management, pointing to either of these two deaths having been caused by work-related stress, it has been established, through extensive research, that practices of a similitude to those implemented by Management towards the carrier craft, pose a potential health risk, both psychologically and physically. These findings are explored in a later chapter.

Approximately a week after Peter's passing, the carriers were gathered together on the work floor: not to be inquired of as to their welfare, nor to be offered support and solace, but for the purpose of being scolded for incorrect actions, such as missing scan points along the routes. "This is your discussion," they were told sternly, with the implication that the next time they erred, they would be called into the office for a pre-disciplinary interview (PDI).

A speech that followed, around one week later, had a similar tone. When one of the carriers spoke up with a comment, he was told: "This is a monologue. I repeat: this is a monologue." If he wished to speak with Management, it would be later, inside the office.

In the street, along the route of a letter carrier, are barcodes calculatedly placed at different locations, for carriers to scan using the same hand scanners they employ to scan letters and parcels "delivered" or "attempted." The time of day is automatically logged into the scanner. It is expected of the carriers, that they take no more than the prescribed minutes to deliver the mail from one scan point to the next.

Recently, a female carrier confided in me that she was finding it nearly impossible to psychologically bear up, as she had no time to take her lunch anymore. She confessed that she was taking absence leave a great deal because of this.

It is calculated by Management in the mornings, before the carrier leaves for the street, according to mail volume for that day, exactly, to the minute, how long it ought to take for the carrier to complete his entire route before returning to the station. Any carrier taking longer than what the computer systems in place calculate to be the time it takes to perform the

job tasks, must give an accounting to his supervisor, and this ahead of time by phone.

In one instance, a manager called down a letter carrier, out on the work floor in the presence of his peers, for minutes not accounted for. The conversation went similarly to the following:

Manager: 'It should have taken you from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM from Point A to Point B. From 12:18 PM to 1:18 PM, you went from Point B to Point C. That leaves eighteen minutes unaccounted for. What were you doing, those eighteen minutes!!??'

Carrier (very disgruntled tone of voice): "If that's the way you feel."

The letter carrier, in addition to this, if the calculations dictate that there is more than sufficient time to complete his own route, is sent to portions of other delivery routes before arriving back at the station. This is called: "undertime."

The carriers are currently being put on standby in the office for increasingly longer intervals. They are rushed through their work at a rapid pace, and then when the work runs out for a little time, they are put on standby.

The same carrier who had returned this past winter in the snowstorm, appearing near tears, now in this summer's heat, once again came back one evening with the same contorted facial expression, stating that Management's demands were too heavy.   He felt discouraged and depressed. He questioned what good it would do for the union to grieve their practices. 'They've already committed the acts. It's too late, because they weren't prevented from doing it in the first place. So now they can laugh in our faces.'

Another carrier who was present gently replied: "You can't arrest someone until he actually commits a crime."

Other craft employees, as well, appear ready to break down physically or mentally. A clerk, not long ago, took me aside, and despairingly said, in essence, that the work environment was such, that it was waiting for someone to come through the door and commit a violent act.

In two separate incidents, a clerk and a truck carrier were both injured (strained shoulder and strained stomach muscles), because neither took the extra couple seconds it requires to gauge the weight of a heavy parcel or sack, before lifting it or asking help to lift it. The truck carrier had shown signs of stress for quite some time prior to this, and had, within weeks before injuring his shoulder, had a prior incident, in

which he returned from the street in the morning, saw the heavy volume of Express Mail waiting there for him, which he was required to deliver by 12 noon, became very angry and unable to deal with it, and left the building. Later, he had returned, feeling able at that time to continue working.

Around June, the supervisor whom the previous manager had removed, was returned to the New Lots Station by management. The new manager, who, upon announcing this and receiving negative feedback from the craft employees, stated that this same supervisor had been told that the manager's orders would have to be strictly adhered to.

A carrier who had returned from the street, came to the registry window to turn in his carrier keys and accountable mail. I was in the registry that day, and I heard him distinctly say "Hi, hate." I instinctively knew that this was not directed against me, and I remarked: "Wow. That's deep."

He repeated "Hi, hate," again, then as he turned to leave the registry window, I heard him say: "Hi, _____," using the name of the same supervisor whom management had brought back to the station.

In July, 2008, a casual (temporary) clerk was brought to our station to assist with the close of day. His presence has lessened the strain of overwork, in that he assists with mail dispatch, and with the mail pickup notices over the window.

This comes also with a price, as clerks are being scrutinized all the more closely for the purpose of standby time, as it is promised us that "They're coming back (Function 4)."

A craft employee who works at the Brooklyn General Mail Facility, who visited our station briefly one day, having worked here prior to his going to the G. M. F., reported that the practice of Management, there, is to select employees and place them on standby time for eight hours. The remaining employees who are performing work, are micromanaged by the supervisors, who expect lightning-swift performance at a continual rate. 'We're working very hard and very fast,' the employee said.

It is apparent that the higher the rate of speed, the sooner the work is finished, and this results in more hours of standby time which Management considers as 'wasted time' which can be eliminated through more excessing. It is also equally apparent, that elimination of every work hour being counted in

the standby clock rings, leaves behind a body of employees working at feverishly high pace, non-stop.

At the G. M. F., on the day tour (Tour II), are senior employees who have been employed for years by the U. S. Postal Service, and for whom it took many of those years to be able to attain to a day tour at the plant, as all positions must be bid upon, and it is the senior bidders who are awarded first.

The Management over Brooklyn has plans to eliminate the Tour II shift, and to remove all the "old-timers" to night tours.

Once again, this move on the part of Upper Management is synchronous with another event: the U. S. Postal Service has also announced an early retirement plan.

In the Spring of 2008, there were, by that time, around twenty varying clock rings posted by the time clock. Each detail was assigned its particular clock ring. Letter boxing, flat casing, small parcel sorting, delivery confirmation sorting and scanning, dispatch, and, of course, standby: these and many more details were to be accounted for, each and every time we were shifted from one operation to another. If we missed clock rings this was a potential write-up, to be added to the threat of write-ups which already were being held over the heads of craft employees who forgot to clock out and/or into lunch. Because extensive multitasking had now become part of our daily routines, as every minute was counted in our work day, the added burden of making timely clock rings for every task was, at the very best, arduous, even and especially in the face of being written up.

The origins of these practices are, again, from upper Management, who has ordered supervisors and managers not to correct employees erroneous or missed clock rings, but to write them up, instead.

Since around the beginning of August, a supervisor has written down which clerk put up the P. O. Box mail. I questioned the wherefores, on August 6th, and was told that a supervisor keeps a record, and every day goes into one boxholder's mail slot at random, pulls the mail out and searches for mistakes.

Human imperfection, therefore, is regarded in the same light as a deliberate violation.

The precision of our tasks had augmented steadily. New minute details had been added, which did not increase the time allotted us to finish the tasks.
 Missent mail, which once was divided several ways,

and dispatched out in a post con, now required two post cons or hampers, which were labeled with precision and sent off to two different locations. One was for mail sprayed with incorrect barcodes, or having no zip code or an incorrect zip code. The other was for mail correctly coded and genuinely "missent" due to error. Mail which had not before been separated by class, now was required to be broken down into first and bulk classes.

In the registry, prior to this, only registered, Express Mail and C.O.D.'s were listed by actual number and verified as such, while certified mail was counted by piece and signed for by the carriers by amount only (example: five certified pieces signed out by the carrier, and five pieces signed back in at night by the registry clerk.) Now, new scanning systems scanned and enabled a printout of every certified letter by carrier route and by certified label number, requiring the registry clerk to verify each and every number of the returning mail at night, regardless of whether five pieces are assigned to a carrier, or thirty-five.

On the window, the retail clerk who took in a parcel for mailing had already been required to follow the "G. I. S. T." rule, which meant greeting the customer, inquiring as to their needs (concerning speed of delivery, for example), suggesting services such as insured mail of delivery confirmation, then thanking the customer at the end of the transaction. Now, the window clerk was also mandated to ask whether the parcel contained contents fragile, liquid, perishable or potentially hazardous.

For each and every time a clerk was so much as asked a question by a customer, the POS system was programmed with a selection which we were to choose from in logging in that question. Questions such as requests for passport forms and employment applications, summoning a supervisor, and inquiries as to postal rates or speeds of delivery, each were furnished with a separate key. All this comes under the heading of: "Non-revenue transaction." We have been told to do this, or face the risk of someone in a remote office sitting behind a computer and counting the work figures, concluding that we spend too much idle time and once again eliminating clerk positions in the station.

In July, a clerk who was called down by management on account of a bucket of mail which was left behind, flew into a rage: "How can you expect me to remember this when you have me doing ten things at once!?"

Throughout this "transformation" process, Manage-

ment has been instructed to man the lobbies with personnel, who take the pick-up notices and retrieve the parcels or certified mail to be delivered, and who help service customers with answers to questions, and with needed forms. At first, clerks were sent into the lobbies to stay and perform lobby directing. Later they shared this duty with supervisors and 204B's. Then later still, while clerks collect notices and deliver mail over the pickup window, supervisors have taken on this work a great deal of the time, and are, with very few exceptions, the sole lobby directors. This has occurred, in spite of upper Management's continuing pursuit of our minutes.

Besides the inordinately lengthy lines and the atmosphere of hostility against the "simple transaction" customers, the unbridled contempt held by a new breed of Management against everyman has manifested itself in other various but similar ways:

In Brooklyn, the Post Office Box rent rates, which formerly were categorized by zoning (the well-to-do neighborhoods received a Zone 1 rating and boxes were rented there at a higher rate; the poorer neighborhoods were given a lower-rate Zone 2), were rezoned into solely a Zone 1 category. Some of the poorer boxholders in our station gave up their Post Office boxes, because they could not afford the ensuing $22 annual increase.

While the U. S. Postal Service had already, quite some time ago, quietly discontinued much of their guaranteed Sunday and holiday delivery to many locations, for the Sunday delivery service which still remained, in such locations as Manhattan, the Postal Service had had the distinction of not charging any extra fee for what had always been understood to be the standard of Express Mail. Recently, this was abandoned, in favor of a Sunday delivery surcharge. Saturday guaranteed Express mail is being discouraged as well, in a more subtle manner. When a customer mails Express mail on Friday, and the guarantee is "next day," the window clerk is taken to a computer screen giving a choice between Saturday delivery or Monday delivery. This is a clever means of persuading a customer to choose service similar to Priority or First Class Mail, and still pay the Express rate. If upper Management is successful in dissuading the public at large from weekend delivery of Express Mail, it would eliminate the one largest barrier standing in the way of a Monday through Friday delivery service week.

Cluster boxes have been, and are continually being installed throughout the United States, particularly in brand new developments. Instead of every home having its own mailbox, these impersonal boxes are located sometimes a distance away, and "service" more than one dwelling.

In Brooklyn, a cluster box many times is located in the middle of a city block. The carriers are told by Management not to ring the doorbells of homes with cluster boxes, when there are items such as parcels for delivery, but to only leave a peach-colored notice in the cluster box. The minutes saved by this, and taken away from the customer foremost, and then the carrier, are calculated by Management, and translated into standby time and into undertime. The first sets of keys for the cluster boxes are given without charge by the Postal Service, to the customers. If lost, there is a $25.00 charge for lock replacement. New tenants moving into apartments previously rented by tenants who never turned in their keys to the box, often find themselves paying the $25.00 fee just to get their mail delivered: and this somewhere down the street.

In June, 2008, parts of New York City were chosen as a "test case" by upper Management. Registered mail originating from foreign countries was to be placed among the ordinary mails: no longer secured, no longer arriving to the registries in locked pouches. When a foreign registered article is "Returned to Sender," it was to be placed among the ordinary pieces, the "bang-bangs," as they are commonly called. If upper Management deems this "successful," they plan to implement this throughout the entire United States.
This practice is in direct violation of handbook DM-901, Registered Mail, Article 721: "All Registered Mail;" Article 721.1: "Separation From Ordinary Mail" : "Keep registered mail separate from ordinary mail."

The domino effect of the actions taken by upper Management against the five Guiding Principles of the Postal Service, is thunderous. But is it cataclysmic in actuality, or in perception only?

Der Psychoterror

In Germany, the term "Psychoterror," which is seen here in the German language, is used to describe workplace bullying.

When one hears bullying in the workplace mentioned, it is widely assumed that this refers to a worker intimidating, coercing or threatening a co-worker, or a supervisor sexually harassing or singling out one employee out of the group. In Germany, as well as in the United Kingdom, Japan, and other countries, the definition of bullying incorporates management intimidating, demeaning and harassing an entire group of employees as well. According to the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), among the behaviors falling under the heading of bullying, are: "(employees) being told 'or else,' having no choice- no say," "unreasonable demands or impossible targets, restrictive and petty work rules, constant, intrusive surveillance or monitoring, shouting or abusive language," and "people afraid to speak up about conditions, behaviours or health and safety." . . . "Bossing people around, intimidating, threatening or keeping them under pressure is also bullying ... Changes at work, brought about by deregulation, privitisation restructuring, downsizing and technological change, have contributed to an erosion of working conditions for many Australians."

A survey conducted by the Trade Union Council of the UK, resulted in managers being identified as responsible for bullying practices 75% of the time, as opposed to co-workers. "A July 1999 Institute of Management (IOM) report suggested bullying was part of the new management credo. It concluded that new 'leaner' business practices are a breeding ground for 'corporate bullying on a large scale.' . . . This attitude starts at the top and filters down through an entire organization spawning a whole brood of macho style managers in its wake."

This behavior is defined, by the TUC, as: "Long-term and persistent negative behavior, ranging from abuse, humiliation and ridicule to the imposition of unmanageable workloads, unreasonable deadlines and continual fault-finding."

In 2000, from 10-15% of all suicides in Sweden were alleged to be caused by workplace bullying. This echoed in Japan as well, where "record levels of suicides" occurred.   -Psychoterror! Action is Needed to End Bullying in the Workplace, 2000, Hazards Publications Ltd., United Kingdom; Being bossed around is bad for your health, ACTU flyer.

In France, in 2007, within six months time, five employees of the PSA Peugeot Citroen automobile manufacturing plant committed suicide, prompting French president Nicolas Sarkozy to initiate a government investigation into work-related stress. In addition to this, three employees of the Renault SA design centre, also located in France, took their own lives as well, one of whom left a suicide note faulting "work pressure."

While job cuts have been linked to one of the main causes of stress in these instances, one of the other causes, in addition to factoring in outside influences, was the practice of applying 'increased pressure on workers to improve productivity.'

- -France studies work stress after car plant suicides, Emmanuel Jarry, Reuters, July 19, 2007.

Australian newspaper The Age, in an article: Working for a living can kill you, May 31, 2004, describes the research conducted by the Urban Ministry Network, in its examination of coroners' records of workers who had committed suicide, where the "significant work-related factors" in many of these cases, were "work stress, fear of retrenchment (the practice of economizing, cutting expenses), arguments with employers or colleagues, performance pressure, long hours and lack of job satisfaction."

Psychoterror, combined with other workplace factors, define the term: work-related stress. The official definition, as per the European Commission, is: "A pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and noxious ('Injurious to health or morals [< Lat. noxius <noxa, damage.]' -American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition) aspects of work content, work organization and work environment." -Enough Workplace Stress: Organizing for Change, CUPE, Copyright 2003.

"Job stress results when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker." -Stress . . . At Work, NIOSH Publication 99-101.

"Imposing unreasonable demands on subordinates and withholding information needed to carry out their jobs" heads a list of "Management Don'ts", produced by the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health, 2005. This list of managerial behaviors leading to higher mental health risks in the workplace, also includes, among others, refusal of management to allow employees discretion over their own work, creating a treadmill effect (no time to meet the demands of a work overload), and

"rejecting out of hand ('Without consideration or deliberation: to reject a proposal out of hand.' -Dictionary.com) employees' concerns about workload."
The Health and Safety Executive of the United Kingdom, in its brochure: Management competencies for preventing and reducing stress at work, Phase Two, J. Yarker MS.c., Ph.D., C Psychol., et al., includes a comprehensive list (as shown next page), comparing good and bad managerial practices in eighteen categories, as per their impact on the health of the workplace. Transformational management (inspiring, trustworthy, mentoring leadership, encouraging innovative thinking and rewarding achievements) promotes a healthy low-stress workplace. Passive avoidant management (a step below transactional management, which entails keeping track of employee mistakes; passive avoidant management includes "fighting fires," a style of management consisting of expending ones energy to "fix" problems when they arise, combined with detachment from subordinates) is related to exhaustion and cynicism in employees, a precursor to burnout.

Surveys conducted in the United States, Canada, Great Britain and the European Union are unanimous in their returns, in showing a marked average of 25% or more workers reporting stress either often or always. "28% of workers in the 15 European Union member states experience work-related stress as a major health problem, making the second most common health problem, second only to back pain." -What is Occupational Stress? How does it impact human health? What can we do about it?, J. V. Johnson, PhD., University of Maryland School of Nursing.
The St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company reports that work stress leads both family and financial problems, in the number of health complaints associated with stress.

"Three quarters of employees believe the worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago," according to the Princeton Survey Research Associates. -Stress . . . At Work, NIOSH Publication 99-101.

There is a significant difference between normal stress, which is temporary in nature, is dealt with, and subsides; and continuous, toxic stress which does not abate.

It is the instinct of the human body to continually work to maintain a state of balance. This is called homeostasis. In restful circumstances, this requires far less effort than in stressful conditions. When stress occurs, it begins in the brain, and triggers the body to take extra, and sometimes extraordinary measures to restore homeostasis. Prolonged, sustained stress can cause irreversible damage, as continual subjection to the effects of these additional bodily measures are potentially harmful and life-threatening. The wearing away brought to bear upon the body due to stressors, is called the allostatic load. Toxic stress causes a continual, sustained allostatic response.

Neurogenesis in the Adult Brain: The Association with Stress and Depression, Sonja Mak, Medical News Today, identifies the brain as being "the key organ in the response to stress." Brain reactions are the first to be triggered by stress episodes; the brain then determines what is threatening and/or stressful to us and regulates either positive or negative reactions throughout the body.

Studies have shown that the brain, when stressed, causes the body to produce hormones, including adrenaline. -Bullying Bosses 'drive people to mental illness', Nic Fleming, Science Correspondent, Telegraph.co.uk, April 19, 2008. Multitasking is a chief cause of the above, and the continual release of these stress hormones can cause bodily harm, including damage to the brain's memory cells. - Multitasking and Stress: Doing too many things at once is not only unproductive; it can actually make you sick, Chris Woolston, Consumer Health Interactive, A Healthy Me, Mass. Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

While it has been argued by researchers in the past that in order for the brain to signal the body to release stress hormones, a person must first perceive his situation to be stressful, further research has uncovered neurohormonal activation in subjects who, on a conscious level, do not feel stressed. This can be true in the case of workers subjected to a continually stressful work environment, who attempt to "adapt" to their surroundings. -What is Occupational Stress? How does it impact human health? What can we do about it?, J. V. Johnson, PhD., University of Maryland School of Nursing.

The International Labor Organization's Fact Sheet No. 11, Work insecurity, states that work-related ill health is "a global sickness," "a 21st-century disease." The fact sheet addresses the shifting away from statutory regulations by businesses, to the detriment of the health and safety of employees, combined with labor intensification, time pressure, automation and contracting out of labor, all as factors causative of work stress; it warns: "Heart attacks, suicide and strokes

are expected to be the top occupational diseases of the 21st century."

Depression is on the rise and is reaching epidemic proportions, prompting the World Health Organization to predict that depression will soon be the #1 public health burden in world. The Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health concurs, in stating that "The leading cause of disability- by far- is depression."

The first ill effects resulting from toxic work-related stress, are psychological disorders, which, in turn, can spawn a host of physical illnesses. Substantial increases in depression, anxiety and burnout are, as time and again concluded in studies conducted worldwide, found to be linked with work stress. Among the international studies on the connection between work stress and mental illnesses, is the Canadian Community Health Survey 1.2, conducted in 2002, among 24,324 employed men and women. It was found that 4.6% of the workers suffered from major depressive episodes.

Men were impacted by work stress in a different manner than were women. High job strain in general, defined as "work that is demanding but leaves people little independence or decision-making authority," contributed mostly to depression among men, while low levels of authority at work led mostly to depression in women.

Both genders, however were 'significantly' affected by lack of social support at work, both from supervisors and from co-workers.

 - Major Depressive Episodes and Work Stress: Results from a National Population Survey, Emma K. Robertson Blackmore, et al., American Journal of Public Health, 9/27/07.

Long hours, pressure and lack of clear direction cause depression or anxiety in both men and women as well: women 75% more likely to become depressed than those with little stress on the job, and men 80% more likely, according to a study in Dunedin, New Zealand, directed by Professor Richie Poultron, Otago University, of 891 people from 1972-1973 when they were born, until c. 1995. In addition to this:

 a. 45% newly diagnosed cases of depression were linked directly to work stress.
 b. 12% of people experiencing work stress, with no prior history of mental illness, had their first depression episode at age 32.

-Now the proof: Work stress does make people mentally ill,
Martin Johnston, New Zealand Herald, 8/2/07.

B. Researchers at Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London, UK., also have studied the New Zealand results, and discovered that one in 20 cases of depression is annually attributable to work stress. Women are usually more affected than men.

The subjects of the research all were previously healthy, and from a variety of professions. Time pressure was reported to be the most important cause of depression or anxiety.

-High-stress jobs 'double chances of depression', Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor,   Independent.co.uk, August 2, 2007.

"Participants (in the New Zealand study) were diagnosed as having suffered clinical depression or anxiety if they matched the criteria set out by the American Psychiatric Association for cases causing daily impairment to quality of life and requiring medical intervention."

(This study rules out, therefore, any who have not yet reached the point of requiring medical intervention, but who are teetering at the edge. If a large number of acknowledged cases, meeting the APA criteria, were discovered to be suffering from work-related stress, then it can be safely concluded that were the number of workers not meeting the criteria yet suffering from depression or anxiety due to work stress, also considered, the numbers would likely double at the least.)

The New Zealand research is considered an example which holds true in other industrialized countries, on an equal footing. - Bullying Bosses 'drive people to mental illness', Nic Fleming, Science Correspondent, Telegraph.co.uk, April 19, 2008.

Stress can cause psychological breakdown, as evidenced in the 1960 case of a Michigan assemblyline worker, who had trouble keeping up with the demands of the job. He attempted to work on more than one assembly at a time, became confused, was repeatedly called down by the foreman, and suffered a breakdown. -Stress . . . At Work, NIOSH Publication 99-101.

Knowing that stress begins its assault on the brain, which is essentially the control center for the entire body, and witnessing the mental effects that en-

sue, it becomes that much easier to understand the fact that psychological well-being is hardly an exclusive target of a toxic work environment. Stress is a lethal weapon against the principles and processes of the entire physiology of the body.

Wounds That Will Not Heal

The body's triggered stress response to fear and/or anger (a.k.a. stressors), generating hormonal secretions, is detrimental, in a long term scenario, to the body's physical well-being.

The excessive stress resulting from employees repeatedly and continually not being able to work to their full potential, not understanding what they produce, not being recognized for their accomplishments, lacking job control, being held under by excessive work demands and working without breaks, "Has been associated with heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive ailments, skin rashes, insomnia, substance abuse and interpersonal and family dysfunction, . . . increased cholesterol and fatty acids in blood, decreased protein synthesis, increased metabolism, faster blood clotting, localized inflammation, increased stomach acids, increased production of blood sugar." "Work overload or underload, job dissatisfaction, job insecurity" are all considered stressors that can lead to these disorders. "The health effects of excessive occupational stress may be more severe where the causes are likely to be persistent and continual and when the person may not have control over them." -Chapter 12, Stress Hazards, Ontario's Basic Certification Training Program Participant's Manual, Copyright 1999, Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

 Burnout

Burnout is a chronic state of emotional and physical exhaustion which affects the cognitive abilities. It comes about when stress, "particularly work-related stress," has taken a toll so great, that a person's coping abilities have depleted. This results in emotional shutdown, which can be permanent.

The Hackney Trades Union Council describes some of the symptoms of burnout as a depletion of emotional resources, "negative feelings, irritability and a deteriorated sense of self-image," a feeling of incompetency, helplessness and hopelessness, and decreased

job performance (Workplace stress: part one, John Page).

Helpguide.org, an organization affiliated with the Rotary Club of Santa Monica, California, lists among the causes of job burnout, the following:

Setting unrealistic goals for yourself or having them imposed upon you.
Being expected to be too many things to too many people.
Working under rules that seem unreasonably coercive or punitive.

Extensive research at the Tel Aviv University in Israel has shown that burnout is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and infertility, particularly in women, due to inflammatory processes it generates in the body, which can become chronic. It has been found that specific emotions can cause specific biological changes in the body. The same held true with depression, particularly in men. -The Association Between Burnout, Depression, Anxiety and Inflammation Biomarkers: C-Reactive Protein and Fibrinogen in Men and Women, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Copyright 2005.

Angina Pectoris and Ischemic Heart Disease

A study in Germany, of 1,749 working men and women, ages 45-65 years, between 2000 and 2003, revealed that those in lower occupational positions and subjected to little reward for their work efforts, and high demands coupled with little control over their own work patterns, were found to have a higher rate of angina pectoris and depression. -When does work stress hurt? Testing the interaction with socioeconomic position in the Heinz Nixdorf Recall Study, N. Wege, et al., Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, Copyright 2008.

A Proposal for an Agenda for Occupational Cardiology: How do we move from Epidemiological Evidence to Prevention-oriented Clinical Practice? (K. Belkic, P. Schnall), states that "Performance at peak capacity with no reserve capacity left unoccupied" causes complete suppression of respiratory sinus arrhythmia, which is fluctuation in the rate of heartbeat that normally occurs from breathing.

In addition to this, research has uncovered the causal effects of mental stress on everyday ischemia, a

restriction of blood flow to the heart, as being a potential rival to physical stressors, in patients with coronary artery disease.

 Arteriosclerosis and Heart Attack and Cardiovascular Mortality

Researchers at the School of Public health, in Berkeley, California, have discovered the likelihood of a 46% increase in the progression of arteriosclerosis on the average, due to work stress in people more prone to react to stress.
In general, "psychosocial factors" lead the list of predictors of heart attack incidences, surpassing "diabetes, smoking, hypertension and obesity" in the Interheart Study, conducted worldwide among 25,000 patients.
Dr. Nestor Vita of Argentina, Vice-President of the XVI World Congress of Cardiology, states: "The impact of stress on the cardiovascular apparatus is due to a direct connection between the brain and the heart . . . A change in lifestyle . . . must be the final goal of any treatment, which means a correct management of work load, time and money."
        -Stress At Work Increases The Progression Of Arteriosclerosis, Medical News Today, May 19, 2008.

The Valmet metal working company in Finland was the subject of research on work stress and cardiovascular mortality (death) in 1973, with a follow-up period of 27 years. Of the 183 deaths that occurred within that time, 73 were from cardiovascular disease. Work stress was linked with a doubling of the rate of deaths fro CVD. -Is the effect of work stress on cardiovascular mortality confounded by socioeconomic factors in the Valmet study?, E.J. Bruner, et al., Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, Copyright 2004.
10,308 civil servants employed in London, UK, aged 35-55 were similarly examined over a period of 12 years, these being primarily white-collar workers, who were assessed in seven phases, half of which were questionnaire-based, and half of which included medical exams. (Whitehall II study) There was a marked increase in events of coronary heart disease among workers reporting work stress, between Phase 1, which lasted three years, and Phase 2, which was only another two years in length, as well as metabolic syndrome, cholesterol, hypertension and angina.   -Work stress and coronary heart disease: what are the mechanisms?, T. Chandola, et al., European Heart Journal, November

22, 2007.

Lack of social support has weighed in heavily as a contributing factor for cardiovascular disease, declaring two sayings tried and true: that a person can die "from a broken heart," and that "No man is an island." In the case of social interaction in the workplace, the support or lack thereof from managers and supervisors towards those seeking to earn their keep, while differing from parental and spousal relationships, is nevertheless an intrinsic part of the equation, as to workers being in good health or workers becoming ill and oftentimes dying prematurely.

Compounding Symptoms

What is essential to realize, in understanding the link between work stress and illness, is that the brain-triggered response to stress can and often does lead to more than one mental and/or physical illness in a person. A worker suffering from stress can become depressed and anxious, while at the same time, his blood sugar and metabolic rate can increase, he can develop high blood pressure, and his muscles can become strained. Another worker could develop digestive problems and heart disease, while still another worker could suffer from lower back and neck pain and from headaches.
The symptoms of work stress, take on a wide variety of combinations. However, some of these are predicted by specific behaviors and styles of management towards workers; and while interchangeable, there are some established patterns, as were evidenced in the above-mentioned medical and psychological studies.
 Alcohol and drug use, depression or suicidal thoughts, headaches, sleep difficulties, high blood pressure, digestive problems, tearfulness, anxiety, nausea, anger, irritability, and loss of motivation, concentration, self-confidence and morale, are all associated with managerial bullying. -Being bossed around is bad for your health, Australian Council of Trade Unions flyer.
Extended (the longest) periods of absenteeism, headaches, heart and muscle tension, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, aggression, confusion, irritability, bad job performance, adverse changes to immune system, and heart disease, while known to result from stress, in general, are specifically linked with "excessive workloads, lack of clear direction from management, conflict between other staff members and a lack

of information on work role and objectives, career opportunities or job security."-Stress in the Workplace, www.funnybone.com.au/workstress.htm.

Dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, rapid breathing, faster blood clotting, widened airways allowing more oxygen into the muscles, sweating, muscular aches and pains, sleep disruption and disorders, fatigue and apathy, chronic chest pains, back and neck pain, change in sexual activity, weight gain or loss, being accident-prone, impairment to the immune system, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, menstrual disorders, are related to overwork and accelerated pace of work. Falling under the category of overwork are: unreasonable work demands, multi-tasking, faster, more pressurized work pace, performance monitoring, unrealistic management expectations, additional tasks added to existing ones, no staff replacement for vacations and sick leave. -Enough Workplace Stress: Organizing for Change, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Copyright 2003.

Work stress, combined with existing mental and/or physical illnesses, is shown to both intensify and be intensified by the illness(es).

In Canada, a survey was gathered from 22,118 employed respondents, by a psychiatric research team, in order to learn how work stress was related to existing psychiatric disorders in combination with existing chronic physical disorders, to psychiatric disorders alone, and to chronic physical disorders by themselves as well: all of this in relation to worker disabilities. It was concluded that work stress by itself was a factor in causing total and partial disability days; however, when combined with either and existing physical or mental illness, work stress contributed to a substantial increase in disability days, both total and partial, as compared with disability caused by the illnesses themselves. In workers with a psychiatric disorder combined with a chronic physical ailment, work stress caused a soaring rate of total and partial disability days. -Association of Chronic Work Stress, Psychiatric Disorders, and Chronic Physical Conditions With Disability Among Workers, Carolyn S. Dewa, Ph.D, et al., Psychiatric Services, May 2007.

Accidents and Injuries, Both Recorded and Not Recorded

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, Australia includes "high or increased accident rates" among its "indicators of workplace stress," along with "absenteeism, poor or reduced work output, and poor interpersonal relations." -Stress in the Workplace, www.funnybone.com.au/workstress.htm.

High demands and low control in the workplace, inducing the release of both adrenaline and cortisol, a hormone which also originates from the adrenal gland, can alter cognitive abilities, such as appraisal of risk (leading to an increase of accidents), behavior and memory. -What is Occupational Stress? How does it impact human health? What can we do about it?, J. V. Johnson, PhD., University of Maryland School of Nursing.

In addition to this, increased muscle tension, which is a direct result from work stress, is a contributor to ergonomic injuries. The origins of carpal tunnel syndrome and epicondylitis (tennis elbow)can be traced to work stress, as well as working techniques. The hormonal releases due to stress, tighten both muscles and tendons, and the flow of nutrients to tendons is reduced as a result, preventing healing to small lesions caused by ergonomic strain. The releases of adrenaline, noradrenalin, corticosteroids and cytokines (from the central nervous system) all contribute to the breakdown of the tendon fibers.
-Workplace stress: part one, John Page, Hackney TUC Secretary.

A high pace of work has been shown to be a major factor in the exacerbation of musculoskeletal injuries and repetitive motion injuries. What is essential, here, is that a high pace of work does not only involve the rapidity of motion during the performance of a task: it also concerns the amount of time allowed for the body to rest in between tasks. "Having tight or frequently changing deadlines; knowing your performance is being monitored by some electronic system; or being overloaded with work . . . significantly accelerates the risk for developing RMIs." -Major Work-Related Risk Factors, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, July 31, 2007.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work categorizes the musculoskeletal disorders into specific illnesses, and charts the effects of tight deadlines and working at high speed, respectively, on each. The results were that all categories, including backache, stress, muscular pain in neck and shoulders, and injuries, reflected a soaring increase in reported health

problems, both from tight deadlines and high speed. Occupational injuries doubled in both instances. (There are no charts included in this article with resulting statistics from workplaces with combined high speed and tight deadline practices.)
-Work-related musculoskeletal disorders(MSDs) and the pace of work, E-Facts 15, EU-OSHA. Musculoskeletal disorders and back pain can also be caused by lack of social support and work control.
-What is Occupational Stress? How does it impact human health? What can we do about it?, J. V. Johnson, PhD., University of Maryland School of Nursing.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Birmingham, UK, issued an "alert on stress and safety" in 2002, citing stress as a cause of rising accident rates in the workplace. "Traditionally stress has been linked more to ill-health affects rather than safety concerns in the workplace. On the other hand, whether originating within the workplace or outside, it is clear that high levels of stress are likely to be associated with an increase in the frequency of errors (whether slips, mistakes or violations) and that these in turn can increase accident risks." -European Week for Safety and Health. While this article goes on to describe the link between work stress and accidents as "complex," due to individual response to stress, and the kind of stress involved, it nevertheless calls upon management to address, in a broad scope, this issue, both through investigating accidents thoroughly as to whether injured employees were feeling stressed at the time of occurrence; and through preventative measures factoring in stress, in designing or redesigning tasks and machinery.

The link is further confirmed by the American Institute of Stress (Job Stress), which states that Stress has been found to be the cause of 60 to 80% of accidents in the workplace. The Three Mile Island and Exxon Valdez disasters are among the list of work stress-related accidents. Moreover, work stress has been found to be extremely costly, in terms of increasing medical and legal expenses and Workers' compensation claims.

The American Psychological Association cites as a prime example of potential job-related injury, due to work-related stress, the case of a food-processing company in Vancouver, Washington, with two plants, one where an entire shift of workers was laid off; and the other where the swing shift was being eliminated and workers were forced to move to the night shift, forcing those who could not adjust their life demands to meet the hours (such as single parents), to lose their jobs. The study conducted by psychologist Tahira M. Probst, Ph.D. and Ty L. Brubaker, B.S., found that in both incidents, workers surveyed reported a decrease in safety motivation, leading to an increase of wrist, hand and arm injuries. They also concluded that in workplaces where employees are expected to "juggle competing job demands of production, quality and safety," it is possible that they will sacrifice safety, cutting corners to keep up with productivity. This is especially true (though not limited to this scenario) when employees feel the pressure of fear of job loss, and are not rewarded for working safely. (Workplace Stress and Fear of Lay-offs Can lead to Increased Rates of Worker Illness and Injury, D. Partenheimer, Public Affairs Office, April 15, 2001).

The Gowan Health Consultants, a Canada-based managerial consulting firm specializing in health and disability management, in their article: Managing a Healthy Workplace, c. 2005-2006, outlining some of the trends concerning health and safety, states that work related accidents in Canada were lessening, but the number of deaths was increasing. "By 2020 it is predicted that the primary cause of death will be depression." The article also emphasized, in spite of the appeared decline of accidents, that an immediate result of work stress, is in fact an increase of accidents.

A possible reason for what appears to be a discrepancy, is the subject of more than one source, and is due to employees not reporting accidents, due to fear of reprisal. Saftek, a United States based safety consulting firm, in a safety talk, Employee Incident Reporting, designed to help managers address accident preventions in the workplace, describes the reasons for the hesitancy of workers to go on record when they are hurt, as:

"Fear of the supervisor's disapproval.

"Not wanting to lose time from the job on piece-work assignments.

"Not wanting the incident on their work records.

"Not wanting to be embarrassed by co-worker ridicule or sarcasm.

"Reluctance to spoil the unit's safety record.

"Dislike for the red tape involved.

"Failure to understand why incident should be reported.

"Not recognizing the damage that could result

"Not wanting to be the subject of an incident investigation."

Based on the above, it can be concluded, that, alone, the increase of levels of anxiety, depression and burn-out due to job stress among employees, can directly lead to a decline of incident reporting. Therefore, a wide discrepancy between the actual number of stress-related accidents and the reported figures, worldwide, is a likelihood not to be ignored.

The Correlations and the Conclusions

In July, 2008, the research I had undertaken on the subject of work-related stress, led me to a question, the answer to which I had not found addressed in any of the literature I had read:

The scenario was a workplace which, at one time had had a healthy, low-stress environment, but which changed when new management took over, and became very stressful.

The first group were employees who had been on the job for years, who had experienced a normal environment, and which now were subjected to lean management practices, computer monitoring and micromanagement.

The second group were new employees who had known nothing else, except the current work conditions.

It was my desire to learn which group would be most affected by the poor environment: workers who had known what the conditions were prior to the change, or workers who had come in when the new management was already in place.

On July 22, at 12:30 PM, I telephoned the national EAP hotline for the United States Postal Service, and was connected to Larry, a counselor in St. Louis, Missouri. He explained to me that there was a possible variability, that it posed the question of heredity vs. environment (a subject of intense psychology studies, which has been pondered and researched for decades, as to which is the chief deciding factor in shaping the human personality traits: also called "nature [heredity] vs. nurture [environment]"). But "generally," he said, 'It would be easier for the person who walked off the street, to adapt: he didn't know how it was, then!'

At 12:34 PM, I called Lifenet, and reached a counselor named Greg, from New York City. His immediate reaction was the same: that the first group who had previously enjoyed good working conditions would suffer the greater stress, due to the changes they were subjected to, psychologically.

Bill Egan, Director of the New York State Psychological Association, stated that while he was not a licensed psychologist, his choice lay with the first group as well, as suffering the greater stress.

I then proceeded to email Linda Hoopes, President, Atlanta Society of Applies Psychology; Mark C. Healy, Communications Coordinator, Bay Area Applied Psychologists; and Chris Wright, Department of Psychology, San Francisco State University, with the same inquiry.

The response was near unanimous, in selecting the first group as the workers who would suffer the most stress.

Chris Wright had first stated that this was not his field of study, however after I wrote him a second time, generalizing the question as: "If a person has known a good environment and that environment changes and becomes a bad environment, is that more traumatic for that person, than for a person who has always known a bad environment?" , he replied: "I would say, generally, yes. It depends, of course, on the specific circumstances in each environment." (Copies of the email correspondences , next pages.)

The United States Postal Service, unlike some other employers, is not reputed for its high turnover rate of employees. The term "career employee" describes the lifetime devoted by the majority of its workers of all crafts, to the Sanctity of the Mails.

Since the Transformation Plan, fewer new employees have joined the ranks. This, all the more so, shifts the statistical weights and balances towards the majority of postal workers having had enough years of service for their entry to have occurred before the millennium, and of this majority, mostly well before the millenium.

In short, most of us 'knew how it was, then.'

An outline, below, which I have compiled, of only some of the current practices of the upper Management of the U. S. Postal Service, shows them to be in severe contrast with the standards of good management, even as they are in severe contrast with the standards of the Guiding Principles. Following each practice, are behaviors identified as causative of stress, under which the practice falls; this followed in turn by

corresponding types of work stress, as researched; and finally, some of the known illnesses produced by these categories of stress.

 As is evidenced below, the majority of the causes and effects are repetitious, and may appear redundant. In reflecting further on this, however, in relation to psychology, it is, in fact, a clear and chilling body of evidence of employees being subjected to massive doses of stress, and this in multiple ways, in multiple aspects: individually (as one stressor), in combination (stressors joined or clustered in different groupings, or en masse), and in compounding through repetition and augmentation: both as perceived by each individual, and in actuality:

1. Function 4 visits, and Function 4 returning year by year.
    a. Retrenchment, micromanagement, applying increased pressure on workers to improve productivity, long-term and persistent negative behavior, labor intensification, lack of social support, unrealistic goals being imposed on workers, "performance at peak capacity with no reserve capacity left unoccupied."
        b. Fear of retrenchment, job insecurity, lack of say or control, lack of job satisfaction,
    c. anxiety, depression, heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive ailments, skin rashes, insomnia, substance abuse and interpersonal and family dysfunction, . . . increased cholesterol and fatty acids in blood, decreased protein synthesis, increased metabolism, faster blood clotting, localized inflammation, increased stomach acids, increased production of blood sugar, cardiovascular mortality, coronary ischemia and burnout.

   Each recurring visit from Function 4 compounds all of the above, and produces trauma through repetition, especially through memories of each prior visit and the resulting stressors and reactions. New regroupings of clustered stressors are nearly inevitable.

2. Excessing, shortages.
    a. impossible targets, treadmill effect, labor intensification, lack of social support, no staff replacement for vacations and sick leave, employees not being rewarded for working safely.
    b. job insecurity and feeling of displacement, anxiety (moral and financial), cynicism, job dissatisfaction, lack of say or control, helplessness, suicidal thoughts.
    c. Heart attack, suicide, depression, stroke, coronary ischemia, cardiovascular mor-tality, anxiety, de-

pression, heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive ailments, skin rashes, insomnia, substance abuse and interpersonal and family dysfunction, . . . increased cholesterol and fatty acids in blood, decreased protein synthesis, increased metabolism, faster blood clotting, localized inflammation, increased stomach acids, increased production of blood sugar, burnout, extended absenteeism, accidents.

3. Multitasking, combined with a clock ring for each task: list of c. 20 different clock rings for different operations, along with work operations becoming increasingly precise and detailed.
    a. Multitasking, high demands coupled with little control over one's own work, excessive workloads, additional tasks added to existing ones, "rejecting out of hand employees' concerns about workload."
        b. confusion, anxiety, decreased job performance, irritability, difficulty coping, fatigue, apathy, being accident prone.
    c. psychological breakdown, burnout, brain memory cell damage, angina pectoris, ischemic heart disease, cardiovascular mortality, accidents and injury, carpal tunnel syndrome, musculoskeletal disorders, dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, rapid breathing, faster blood clotting, widened airways allowing more oxygen into the muscles, sweating, muscular aches and pains, sleep disruption and disorders, chronic chest pains, back and neck pain, change in sexual activity, weight gain or loss, impairment to the immune system, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, menstrual disorders.
(As per the online American Heritage Dictionary, the increased precision of tasks, in combination with the multitude of other stressors noted, in this section and overall, such as overwork and intimidation, falls under definitions 2 and 3 of "torture" : "2. Excruciating physical or mental pain; agony: the torture of waiting in suspense. 3. Something causing severe pain or anguish.")

4. Eliminating Tour II old timers: move them to the night tours.
    a. Lack of social support, job insecurity, effort-reward imbalance, humiliation, having no choice, no say, low levels of authority, demeaning, no recognition for accomplishments (all of this especially compounded with senior workers having given many years of service).
    b. Job insecurity, fear, anger, helplessness, hopeless-

ness, displaced feeling, "deteriorated sense of self-image," decrease in safety motivation, fear of retrenchment, exhaustion, cynicism.

    c. Depression, suicide, anxiety, burnout, increase of hand, wrist and arm injuries, accidents, heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive ailments, skin rashes, insomnia, substance abuse and interpersonal and family dysfunction, . . . increased cholesterol and fatty acids in blood, decreased protein synthesis, increased metabolism, faster blood clotting, localized inflammation, increased stomach acids, increased production of blood sugar, extended absenteeism.

5. Threatening with write-ups for petty things, such as clock rings, missed scan points out in street; little or no margin for imperfection: imperfection treated the same as deliberate violation.

  a. psychoterror, intimidation, harassment, workers not being recognized for accomplishments, job insecurity, being told "or else," effort-reward imbalance, lack of social support, unrealistic management expectations, working under rules that seem unreasonably coercive or punitive.

    b. fear, anger, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, difficulty coping, exhaustion, feeling of incompetency, negative feelings, depression or suicidal thoughts, headaches, tearfulness, nausea, irritability, and loss of motivation, concentration, self-confidence and morale, workers "afraid to speak up about conditions, behaviours or health and safety."

    c. suicide, burnout, alcohol and drug use, depression, headaches, sleep difficulties, high blood pressure, digestive problems, nausea, accidents and injuries.

6. Management "taking back our minutes," time demands impossible to meet, undertime to carriers in the street and in the station.

  a. Intimidation, high (unreasonable) demands/ low control, not being able to work to full potential, lack of social support, overwork, retrenchment, accelerated, more pressurized pace of work, tight deadlines, unrealistic management expectations, "performance at peak capacity with no reserve capacity left unoccupied," employees not being rewarded for working safely.

  b. Suicide, depression, anger, helplessness, hopelessness, anger, fear, anxiety, fatigue, apathy, dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, sweating, being accident-prone, increased muscle tension, increase in frequency of errors.

    c. Accidents, faster blood clotting, widened airways allowing more oxygen into the muscles, complete suppression of respiratory sinus arrhythmia, sleep disruption and disorders, muscular aches and pains, chronic chest pains, neck and back pain, change in sexual activity, weight gain or loss, impairment to the immune system, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, menstrual disorders, reduced flow of nutrition to the muscles, breakdown of tendon fibers, doubling of occupational injuries.

7. Standby combined with workers being rushed through tasks, deliberately, to create more standby time.

  a. "Psychoterror, lean management," retrenchment, intimidation, harassment, de-meaning, accelerated pace of work, lack of social support, overwork and underwork, "having no choice- no say," bossing people around, keeping them under pressure, "long-term and persistent negative behavior," abuse, 'increased pressure on workers to improve productivity,' unreasonable and excessive demands, shifting away from statutory regulations, labor intensification, time pressure, working under rules that seem unreasonably coercive or punitive, little reward, little control over one's work, "performance at peak capacity with no reserve capacity left unoccupied," employees not being rewarded for working safely.

Note: The following emotional, psychological and physical responses to the above stressors, all are compounded reactions, on account of the violent shiftings, back and forth, between overworking and then not working at all (standby time). Because both too much and too little work are, independently, stressors causing adverse reactions (Chapter 12, Stress Hazards, Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board), when combined, these are magnified and compounded, one by the other, due to the psychotrauma of being pulled away from one to the other, and due to workers being subjected to both in the first place. This creates a potentially lethal cocktail of clustered effects.

  b. Fear, anger, feeling of displacement, feeling of being violated, depression, suicidal thoughts, confusion, "deteriorated sense of self-image," helplessness, hopelessness, exhaustion, cynicism, dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, fatigue, apathy, being accident-prone.

  c. Suicide, burnout, psychological breakdown, clinical depression and/or anxiety, cardiovascular disease and mortality, diabetes, infertility, complete suppression of respiratory sinus arrhythmia, arteriosclerosis, hypertension, angina pectoris, alcohol and drug use,

digestive problems, sleep difficulties, adverse changes to immune system, faster blood clotting, musculoskeletal disorders, menstrual disorders, injuries and accidents.

8. Management giving pay raises, then taking back more than they gave.
 a. Retrenchment, displacement, lack of social support, demeaning behavior, not recognizing workers for their accomplishments.
 b. Anger, depression, anxiety, apathy, low job satisfaction and morale, feeling of being violated, helplessness, hopelessness, lack of self-esteem, poor work performance, absenteeism.
 c. Clinical depression and/or anxiety, burnout, heart disease, high blood pressure.

9. Webcams, WOS, monitoring every aspect of our work: internally, and externally, and by management visiting the stations; monitoring the P.O. box section for errors, etc.
 a. bullying (psychoterror), "constant intrusive surveillance or monitoring" of performance, intimidation, demeaning, harassing, micromanagement, keeping workers under pressure, "continual fault-finding," applying 'increased pressure on workers to improve productivity', refusal of management to allow employees discretion over their own work, "rejecting out of hand employees' concerns about workload," passive-avoidant management, working under rules that seem unreasonably coercive and punitive, workers not understanding what they produce, lack of control over one's work, imposing of unrealistic goals, "performance at peak capacity with no reserve capacity left unoccupied."
    b. Fear, anger, depression, anxiety, exhaustion, cynicism, confusion, "deteriorated sense of self-image," helplessness, hopelessness, negative feelings, suicidal thoughts, dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, rapid breathing, "Increase in the frequency of errors."
c. Clinical depression and/or anxiety, suicide, burnout, faster blood clotting, widened airways allowing more oxygen into the muscles, muscular aches and pains, sleep disruption and disorders, chest pains, back and neck pains, change in sexual activity, weight gain or loss, impairment to the immune system, menstrual disorders, digestive disorders, repetitive motion injuries.

10. Supervisors doing our work while they claim we have too much free time on our hands, contracting and subcontracting, automation.
 a. "Lean management," retrenchment, displacement, lack of social support, employees not being able to work to their full potential, not understanding what they produce, not being recognized for their accomplishments.
 b. Anxiety, depression, anger, lack of self-esteem, job dissatisfaction, fear, feeling of being displaced (and replaced), hopelessness, helplessness, apathy.
 c. Clinical depression and/or anxiety, burnout, decreased job performance, cardiovascular disease.

11. "Monologue" policy of managerial "communication": hierarchy mentality; managers and supervisors attending meetings and "training" sessions, then returning to suddenly attack employees without warning, through the imposition of new, more constrictive work rules.
 a. Passive-avoidant management, "fighting fires," detachment from subordinates, psychoterror, intimidation, demeaning, unrealistic management expectations, lack of social support, abuse, humiliation, continual faultfinding, refusal of management to allow employees discretion over their own work, "rejecting out of hand employees' concerns about workload."
 b. Anger, fear, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, negative feelings, alcohol and drug use, tearfulness, suicidal thoughts, poor interpersonal relations both at work and at home, apathy, increase in frequency of errors, loss of motivation, concentration, self-confidence and morale.
 c. Suicide, clinical depression and/or anxiety, burnout, cardiovascular disease and/or mortality, angina pectoris, sleep disorders, hypertension.

12. Knowing that workers are suffering compounded trauma due to two deaths a little over three months apart, one week after it is learned the second worker passed away, the manager calls carriers together, tells them "this is your 'discussion'", holding it over their heads, that they have to do this and that correctly or else. Business as usual.
 a. Bullying, passive-avoidant management, lack of social and moral support, detachment from subordinates.
 b. Loss of motivation, concentration, self-confidence and morale, anger, depression, helplessness, hopelessness, tearfulness, suicidal thoughts.
 c. Clinical depression, headaches, sleep difficulties, high blood pressure, digestive problems, heart disease.

13. Supervisor removed by previous manager due to constant complaints, E. E. O. continually being called in; only for same supervisor to be brought back to the station by management:

 a., b. and c. This practice is and produces complete work environment toxicity, even to the supervisor who was removed, and is self-explanatory.

14. Customers subjected to inordinately long lines (treated as though the U. S. Postal Service is doing them a favor letting them live) / Choice of Saturday or Monday delivery for Express Mail and surcharge for Sunday / Cluster boxes.

   a. Lean management, retrenchment, labor intensification, lack of clear direction, policy of shifting away from statutory regulations, workers not being able to work to their full potential, not understanding what they produce, not being recognized for their accomplishments, high demands, low control.

   b. Transfer of customers' demoralization, depression, and anger onto the postal employees who serve them, and the customers' feeling of lack of social support. Job dissatisfaction, job insecurity, depression, anxiety, negative feelings, irritability, deteriorated sense of self image, apathy, fatigue, absenteeism, reduced or poor work output, poor interpersonal relations.

   c. Burnout, clinical depression and/ or anxiety, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, infertility, alteration of cognitive abilities, along with behavior and memory, accidents, angina pectoris, ischemic heart disease.

15. Registered mail displaced into the regular mail. Clerks forced to place registered mail into the regular mail stream, breaking the standard rules, as per Handbook DM-901, Section 721.

   a. Workers having no choice, no say, being forced to commit (the ultimate) violation (of "The Sanctity of The Mails"), policy of shifting away from statutory regulations, retrenchment, lack of clear direction, displacement, lack of control over one's job, "work that is demanding but leaves people with little independence or decision-making authority," not being able to work to full potential, workers not understanding what they produce, lack of information on work role and objectives.

   b. Fear of retrenchment (eliminating the registry or clerks out of the registry), feeling displaced- lack of direction, lack of job satisfaction, confusion, aggression, irritability, guilt, feeling morally violated,

helpless, hopeless, insecurity, anger, cynicism, lack of control over one's job, lack of self-esteem.

  c. Clinical depression, anxiety, heart attack, suicide, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive ailments, skin rashes, insomnia, substance abuse and interpersonal and family dysfunction, . . . increased cholesterol and fatty acids in blood, decreased protein synthesis, increased metabolism, faster blood clotting, localized inflammation, increased stomach acids, increased production of blood sugar, adverse changes to the immune system, musculoskeletal disorders, back pain.

        In conclusion, based on the above, the plans on the part of upper Management to continue eroding further and further the core Principles of the United States Postal Service, do and will create a work atmosphere so toxic, that if allowed to continue, will inevitably result in a great number of premature deaths and widespread physical and mental illness.

        There are standards in place, as to preventative workplace practices against toxic stress. American Psychologist lists the following measures, among others:

     "Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources.

     "Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities.

      "Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.

     "Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers."

NIOSH adds the following:

     "Hold group discussions with employees.

     "Design an employee survey.

     "Measure employee perceptions of job conditions, stress, health, and satisfaction.

     "Collect objective data.

     "Analyze data to identify problem locations and stressful job conditions."

Chapter 12, Stress Hazards, from Ontario's Basic Certification Training Program Participant's Manual, Copyright 1999, Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, recommends first and foremost, that eliminating the source(s) of the stress be placed ahead of helping employees learn coping skills.

        The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work emphasizes that "Workers should not be subjected to the imposition of excessive and non-negotiable performance targets. And workers should be educated

in occupational health issues and be made aware of the occupational factors that influence their health."-Work-related musculoskeletal dis-orders(MSDs) and the pace of work, E-Facts 15, EU-OSHA.

The Health and Safety Executive, in its document: The Management Standards for Work-related Stress (as shown, next page) has outlined an ideal model of a normal, low-stress workplace, upholding the standard of good management policies.

In closing,

It is more than sound business advice for the upper Management of the United States Postal Service to adhere to the sagacity found in The Book Of Ecclesiastes: "Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field" (Ecclesiastes 5:9): It is an imperative, as echoed in the first of the five Guiding Principles: "a. People- Employees are our most valued resource."

The first principle definition of "resource," we have learned to be: "A source of support or help," which is closely followed by the second definition: "An available supply."

The second denotes the essential ingredient of having enough staffing, which serves as a support frame for the first, which is called a "source of support."

In essence, the first Guiding Principle states that without its employees, the United States Postal Service cannot exist; that in fact, the postal employee is its mainstay.

In any society, it would be treason unheard of, for a ship's captain to resort to any length, at any price, to deliberately fray the mainstay of the ship under his command. Any captain doing so, is answerable both to those above him and under him.

Likewise, it is binding that upper Management be held accountable for its open assault against the Postal Service itself and its mainstay of employees, both of whom are endangered, life and limb, in the wake of the aggressor.

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Appendix

(temporary)

This appendix is incomplete, at this time, pending completion of an impartial survey I am conducting at the New Lots Station, and which includes all craft employees.

There are c. 50 employees, including 32 carrier routes, ten clerks, 4 chauffeur-carriers, one mailhandler, one custodian, and several U-carriers who fill in for different routes in the absence of regularly assigned carriers. Almost every employee has accepted a questionnaire, which is prepared by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, concerning stress in the workplace, and which I have modified slightly to fit within the framework of our job descriptions.

At the time of writing this, I have received ten responses. One was from a relatively new employee, who was satisfied with his work environment, and felt little or no stress. He, however, admitted forced overtime as a cause of stress on the job.

The other nine responses all acknowledged a stressful environment, citing lack of control, overwork, too much pressure to complete tasks, conflicting job demands, bullying, harassment, undertime, micromanagement, accelerated pace, lack of respect from supervisors and lack of recognition among the stressors.

In addition, there were complaints of the following physical and mental symptoms on the part of the nine respondents: fatigue, headaches, joint/muscle pain, feelings of powerlessness, being sick more often, stomach/ digestive problems, insomnia, impact on family and personal life, depression and anxiety, neck and back pains, difficulty relaxing, and feeling tense. Should it be so, that the remaining respondents who have yet to turn in their questionnaires, all concur that their work environment is low-stress or stress-free, the final results of the survey would be that 18% of the employees in New Lots Station suffer from work-related stress.