



## The same, or insane?

**T**o each, I say happy new year! I hope that the holiday season was a blessing to each and to his or her family. My hopes, prayers and wishes are that this will indeed be a new year: a new year of enrichment for our members, a new year of jobs for the unemployed, and a new year of our elected representatives putting the working men and women of this country first.

2012: A Postal Odyssey—Odyssey by definition is “long wandering.” This year may be just that for the U.S. Postal Service—for the customers who receive and depend on our services and for the employees who rely on the USPS for their employment. But, maybe the choice of words might be best to describe the coming months as a long *wondering*.

It will be a year of *wondering* if the politicians elected to lead and find solutions to our country’s problems can put partisan politics aside at least long enough to serve the American citizenry. We might spend the year *wondering* if the USPS will be provided access to the money taken from its coffers to protect the service and delivery standards that the American public has come to expect. I am constantly *wondering* if the current financial difficulties of the USPS were intentionally created and are now being used to promote the privatization agenda of those who have been attacking the Postal Service since the early 1980s.

Perhaps we will spend the year *wondering* if the unemployed of this country will be provided job opportunities to care for their families. I find it amazing that the Republican Party repeatedly blocks any attempt to provide unemployment benefits for those who lost their jobs through the shenanigans of Wall Street and the financial institutions, yet can, at the same time, push for even more tax breaks and benefits for the corporations and super-rich.

**One wonder for me this year will be to see if the top echelon of wealthy Americans will be required to start paying their fair share toward stopping the red ink of our government. Most of the efforts of Congress appear**

geared toward cutting the income and benefits of the federal workforce and of those who have retired. Additionally, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid still appear to be targets of its actions, while at the same time Congress continues to argue for extensions of previous wealthy tax cuts and further reductions in corporation and capital gains taxes.

Its position is that this will spur the economy, and the wealth will create jobs. The problem with this approach is that the rich will not do it by themselves. In 1970, the top 1 percent earned 9 percent of all income. By the time the 2008 recession rolled around, the top 1 percent was earning nearly 24 percent. After the recent economic downturn, those figures are undoubtedly even higher.

And, as Wall Street is once again flourishing and the rich are getting richer, they can’t be relied upon, given the past, to fuel the economy. Buying a yacht doesn’t help that much. Also, the rich tend to invest much of their money, which, while sweetening their bank accounts and propping up the stock market, does little to sustain the “real” economy. The truth is that while the very rich may acquire huge wealth, they simply don’t spend enough money. That’s where the American middle class comes in.

**Historically, people of the middle class have been extraordinarily dependable shoppers. The middle class buys huge amounts of regular, everyday goods and services, and because these everyday goods and services are what keep the economy lubricated, society prospers.**

The current assault on American labor is akin to chopping down an apple orchard. And while cutting down the trees makes picking the apples so much easier (and, if you’re a fruit vendor, more profitable), it also deprives the orchard of a future. But, come to think of it, no one ever accused these people of caring that much about the future.

**In closing, may the year provide all that you need, not what others want you to have.** ☒