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The Post Office : A Social Studies Curriculum for Seven and Eight Year Olds

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The Post Office:
A Social Studies Curriculum for Seven and Eight Year Olds
by
Carol Ribner

Advisor: George Burns

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in Education
Bank Street College of Education
1992

The Post Office:
A Social Studies Curriculum for Seven and Eight Year Olds
by
Carol Ribner

This paper presents a curriculum that I have developed and used with my class of second graders over the past three years. The curriculum is the study of the Post Office as part of a study of the neighborhood, and the subsequent planning and running of a schoolwide post office.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank George Burns for his assistance on this curriculum, and for all he has taught me throughout my years at Bank Street.

I would like to thank Stacey George for so enthusiastically jumping in and trying this curriculum with her class at Sea Cliff School, and for all her suggestions along the way.

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SCHOOL SETTING

Glen Head School is located in Nassau County on Long Island's North Shore. It serves the children of Glen Head, Old Brookville, Greenvale, and a small section of Glen Cove. It is part of the North Shore Central School District which consists of three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school.

The student body of Glen Head School consists of approximately 300 children in kindergarten through fifth grade. There are usually three classes per grade with approximately 14 to 17 children in each class. The district has made a commitment to keep class sizes small. Occasionally, if enrollments rise and there are no more classrooms available, a class will have up to 23 children, along with an assistant teacher.

The population of Glen Head School is the most diverse of the three elementary schools in the district. Most of the children come from middle class families, however, there is a range from low income to extreme wealth. The children from Old Brookville live on large properties that used to be farmland. The area has a rural feel to it with no sidewalks and miles of green in all directions. Right across Glen Cove Road is Glen Head. These children live in smaller houses with yards and fences, sidewalks, and neighbors close by. The Greenvale area has newer homes built in the woods. Some of the children's families do not own property but are renting apartments in the area.

The majority of the children are white. There a few Asian, Indian, Hispanic, and Black children. Most of the children attend religious instruction at the local Catholic and Lutheran churches. In recent years the number of children requiring services in English as a second language has increased with children speaking Spanish, Indian languages, Greek, Japanese, Italian, and Chinese.

Classes are grouped heterogeneously. An attempt is made to put into each class equal numbers of boys and girls, a range of abilities in reading and math, quiet and highly verbal children, and a variety of behavior patterns. Much attention is paid to forming varied, workable groups.

The children attend gym and music twice a week, and art and library once a week. These classes are taught by specialist teachers outside of the classroom.

In addition there is a computer room/publishing center with a teacher's aid available. Other support staff include a reading specialist, math specialist, resource room teacher, school psychologist, nurse, ESL teacher, social worker, and speech/language specialist. Children are taken out of class to attend small group or individual class sessions with these support staff.

CLASSROOM SETTING

My classroom includes a carpeted meeting area, three rectangular work tables that seat 4 to 6 children, and a round table that can seat 7 children and a teacher for small group work. There is a bathroom in the room with an additional sink in the classroom which makes cooking and painting in the room possible. There is a science table with scales, magnets, magnifying glasses, and items of interest that the children bring in, or things that we are studying (mealworms, leaves, rocks etc.). There is a library area with books at the children's reach, and a book shelf with curriculum related books on display. The listening center has tape recorders with headphones for listening to stories on tape, and a viewer for watching film strips in small groups. Paper and supplies are readily available to the children as well as math materials. Each child has a cubby for notebooks and personal supplies, and a mailbox where homework and notes to go home are placed.

There is not enough room for specific learning centers to be set up at all times. There are many transitions during our day when we clean up from one activity and get ready for the next. The children have assigned seats in the meeting area and workspots at the tables. They are not required to always sit at these workspots. However, I have found it useful for some children to have a specific place to go, in order to get to work quickly.

The children arrive between 8:45 and 9:00 each morning. There is always a message on the board letting the children know what we

will talk about at meeting. This usually relates to the ideas we are in the process of exploring in our social studies curriculum. The message might read:

"Let's think about what happens when you mail a letter." There is also an assignment for the children to do before 9:15. This might be a brain teaser, or a question for the children to answer on a pocket chart that becomes a graph for us to interpret. Sometimes it is a written assignment that will help the children begin thinking about the meeting topic. The schedule for the day is also posted. The following is a typical day's schedule:

8:45	Children arrive, show me their homework and do the activity on the board.
9:15	Meeting
9:45	Math
10:30	Nutrition Break/Story
10:45	Reading and Language Arts
11:45	Lunch and Recess
12:30	Water and Bathroom
12:40	D.E.A.R. Time (Drop Everything and Read)
1:00	Special Class (Gym, Art, Music, Library)
1:45	Writer's Workshop
2:25	Jobs, Explain Homework, Pack
2:40	Sing
2:50	Dismissal

The schedule is a flexible one. I try to integrate the subject areas as much as possible. Reading might be doing research from content area books relating to whatever science or social studies topic we are studying. Writing might be a time to write a class book about our visit to the post office or a book about everything we have learned about trees. Math might be learning about sorting because when you run a post office you must know how to sort mail. Often our nutrition break becomes a math lesson as we attempt to divide things evenly among us. During projects time (which takes the place of Writer's Workshop once a week) we might be painting a sign for our post office or learning to measure as we bake a cake. A lot of planning needs to take place in order to take advantage of the many opportunities for integrating curriculum throughout the day.

When one walks through the Glen Head School building glancing into classrooms, a great variety of approaches to teaching can be seen. A child in one room may be seated at desks arranged in rows with a great deal of work done from teacher directed activities. Another room will have no desks with children up and about most of the time, actively involved with materials. The administration is encouraging teachers to teach in an active, hands-on way with as much experiential learning as possible, while at the same time still placing a high priority on standardized test results. Teachers are feeling a "push-pull" effect. The administration wants us to teach more and more in ways that have less and less to do with the kinds of things children are asked to do on standardized tests. Much discussion is taking place regarding this dilemma and in finding

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alternate means of assessment. Luckily for me, a minimum of testing is done in second grade. My principal and supervisors have supported my efforts in teaching an integrated curriculum, free of textbooks, where children have lots of active involvement with materials and first hand experiences.

RATIONALE

When I first came to Glen Head School I was assured that I would have the freedom to develop curriculum and to teach in my own way as long as I adhered to the broad goals of the New York State Curriculum. I wanted to be sure that I would be able to develop curriculum that is developmentally appropriate while also being able to follow the children's interests.

The week before school opened that first year I was handed a box full of teacher's editions of textbooks for all the subjects, including three different basal readers, a science text, a social studies text, a math text, a spelling book and a health curriculum, along with the state guidelines for each subject. The New York State social studies curriculum for second grade is to study the neighborhood and local community as it is today and as it was long ago, and to gain an understanding of what a community is.

The social studies textbook for second grade was all about neighborhoods. It dealt with what neighborhoods need, what neighborhoods are like, and included stories about different types of neighborhoods. It left no room for the children to think about what they already knew and to speculate. The book gave the children answers to questions they hadn't yet formulated. It contained sentences like the following: Neighborhoods have needs. People have needs and wants. Neighborhoods provide goods and services. The children were supposed to read these meaningless sentences and look at the color photographs and somehow understand what a

neighborhood is, how a neighborhood functions, the interrelatedness of the people within it, and why people live in neighborhoods. While the book might be useful as an occasional resource for me, I knew it was not something that I would ever want to give the children to read. On the subject of providing children with information and answers to questions Caroline Pratt writes:

Whether I knew the answer or not, I rarely supplied it on demand. Most answers thus given are a waste of a child's time, if not of the adult's. The answer which the child has found out for himself is the one which has meaning for him, both in the information gained and in the experience of finding it. ...Open questions are good things to carry around with one; they sharpen the eye and prod the mind; they give the imagination many a practice spin on the way to finding the answer.¹

All the reading that I had done during my training at Bank Street and all the experiences that I had with children and learning told me that a social studies textbook was inappropriate. If children have the opportunity to raise their own questions about topics that interest them, they will be very interested and motivated to find out the answers. The textbook took this opportunity away from the children. And why should I use a textbook to teach children about the neighborhood when we could just walk out the door and

¹Pratt, 1948, p.45.

experience it first hand? I kept thinking about Caroline Pratt and what she had to say about how children learn:

I saw the urge to see, touch, experience everything at first hand. At the moment that we interpose second-hand knowledge-from the teacher instead of from the world itself, from books rather than from life-again we have begun to waste the child. True there comes a time in a child's learning about his constantly expanding world when he can no longer go out and see for himself. For the far-away and long-ago he must turn to books and museums. But the moment when he must begin to do his learning from second-hand sources is a critical one. If we thrust him toward it too soon, before he has learned to gather his facts and relate them for himself, to ask his own questions and find his own answers, then we have opened another breach through which the desire to learn can be lost.²

It seems that the textbook publishers only received half the message. One of the reasons that a study of the neighborhood is appropriate for seven year olds is precisely that it is so available for first hand experiences. It is not a place "far-away and long-ago" and need not be studied from second-hand sources. Therefore, to do a study of the neighborhood from a textbook about the neighborhood is a philosophy contradicting itself. When I approached my principal about all of these guides she reassured me that I did not have to use them.

² Ibid., pp. 9,10

I began to take walks around the neighborhood to decide how I would approach the study. Studying the neighborhood made sense to me because the world of seven and eight year olds includes the entire neighborhood and community in which they live. It is further than the immediate family, but still available for first hand research. A study of Japan or outer space would be too abstract. Seven and eight year olds can imagine the neighborhood but still touch base with it physically.

A study of the neighborhood also provides an opportunity for seven and eight year olds to understand the world around them; how things work and the interrelationships that exist. Dorothy Cohen writes:

The key to understanding urban life at six or seven lies in the concrete and visible processes of interdependent relationships which make urban life possible. Understanding even a small part of the organization of urban existence encourages children to find their way with some feeling of competency in the complicated adult social structures surrounding them. At the same time, such groundwork in perceiving interrelatedness provides a base for understanding later the more subtle and abstract aspects of man's social functioning. ³

³Cohen, 1972, pp. 151,152.

Children have a passion to learn about their world from the moment they are born. A baby drops its bottle just to see what will happen. Pre-schoolers play house or build one with anything they can find. This passion to learn about the world does not end when children enter school.

I decided that I would take the children for walks around the neighborhood to see what aspects of the neighborhood held a particular interest for them. The school is two blocks away from the Long Island Railroad. We could hear the train whistles and screeching all day long. I thought that the train would probably be the most fascinating part of the neighborhood for them. I began to plan a study of the railroad and gathered books and information.

On our walks around the neighborhood we saw many things. The railroad was interesting but the children seemed to be more fascinated with the people that we met on the street. Storekeepers came out to say hello to us and to ask us what we were doing. A letter carrier stopped to explain to us why there were two stores on the same block that had the same address and they weren't even right next to each other. It turned out that the whole block had to be renumbered as more stores moved in, but the pharmacist didn't want to change his number because it required getting new licenses. Since the post office was on this very block they didn't think the mail would get mixed up. This impressed the children.

Back at school the children seemed to remember this conversation with the letter carrier more than anything else on our walks. I decided that the post office might be a good place to focus

our attention. It fit perfectly into Piaget's ideas about how seven and eight year olds think. Seven and eight year olds are on the threshold of Piaget's stage of cognitive development called concrete operations. They need to be able to see and touch things in order to have a meaningful understanding of them.

Barry J. Wadsworth explains Piaget's theory :

Children acquire knowledge about the physical properties of objects by manipulating the objects. Implicit in Piaget's work is that all other ways of coming to "know" objects are qualitatively inferior. Reading about or listening to someone talk about an object cannot provide the quality of knowing (comprehension) that can be acquired by actively manipulating the object.⁴

Children learn about their world in much the same way that they learn about objects. They need to go out and see and touch and experience things so that discussions about these things are meaningful.

Wadsworth writes:

...the traditional modes of social studies and history instruction through reading and listening to lectures are inappropriate for preoperational children if they are thought of as *sources* of knowledge and meaning. Reading and lectures can be appropriate for concrete operational children to the extent that they provide the child with language experience about those things he already

⁴Wadsworth, 1978, p.50.

knows from concrete experience. ...readings and lectures at these age levels need to be selective and viewed as a supplement to experience.⁵

The post office is literally tactile. The children can see how it happens in school and in their neighborhood. It is very concrete. Most importantly, it came from them. As I thought about it more and more it made sense that the post office would be of interest to them. It is a part of the neighborhood that is an integral part of their lives. They send letters to Grandma and invitations to their birthday parties. However, most children don't receive that much mail, so it is also very exciting when a letter arrives addressed to them.

My Bank Street training impressed upon me the value of using social studies as the core of the curriculum. Reading is a skill necessary for survival in our world as it exists today, as is math. But these are not areas of study. Social studies is the world in which we live. By focusing on the world the child makes sense of it and learns to become an integral part of it. Charlotte Winsor writes:

To become a functioning, participating and caring member of the adult world, a child needs to have a sense of belonging to the world in which he grows. Perhaps even more than that, a sense that it is a good world, that has its problems but also the strength with which to meet its needs. Further, the sense of belonging in that

⁵Ibid., p. 183

especially one's own group-my family, our class and school, our city and country.⁶

Through the social studies comes a need for the three R's. All the reading, writing, spelling and math skills will not only be taught but will be taught when it is most meaningful. I liked the idea of the post office as a particular focus in our neighborhood because it has so much potential for incorporating all the subjects that I am responsible for teaching. It very easily became the core of the curriculum.

Not only should the content of the study provide opportunities for children to develop a sense of belonging to their world, but also the classroom itself can provide an opportunity to belong to a group. In the process of learning about the post office the children are also functioning as part of the community of the classroom and school. They learn to formulate questions and find out answers (or more questions). They learn that others have opinions both different from and similar to their own, and that the group can influence their ideas about the world. They learn that two people can see the same things at the same time, yet understand the experience differently. They learn to work with others of differing abilities and to use their unique strengths and talents to contribute to a task. They learn to be competent, vital members of a group. Charlotte Winsor writes that in teaching social studies there should be:

⁶Winsor, 1957, p.397.

...recognition of the child's needs and capacities. ...[Social studies] offers children a chance to participate in a group activity, to develop thinking relationships, to work at different levels of ability, to use varied talents, to participate both directly and vicariously in social living.⁷

As our study of the neighborhood and focus on the post office progressed that first year, I began thinking about ways that I could help the children recreate their experiences and acquire a deeper understanding of them. I did not have blocks in my classroom, nor did any of the other second or first grades. I would have liked to use blocks to build a community and have the children take on the different roles of the people working within the community. My classroom was already markedly different from the other two second grades. Some parents were having difficulty understanding why the children in my room used beans and pattern blocks and other manipulatives to learn math when all the other second graders "gave that up in kindergarten." I was afraid that to borrow the blocks from the kindergarten would be too difficult to explain at that time, even though a case could be made for using blocks all the way through the upper grades.

It was important to me to fit into the community in which I was working. I was teaching in a way that I believed in. I could compromise on the blocks without compromising my teaching. I felt the community needed a little more time to understand what I was

⁷Ibid., p.401.

doing. Blocks could come another year. But I had to come up with another active experience that would solidify their comprehension and culminate the study.

I did a search of other neighborhood and post office curriculums. The only reference to the post office that I could find was the work Caroline Pratt had done at the City and Country School. At this school, all the children held jobs that served a need within the school community. One group ran the school store, another ran the printing press, and another ran a post office for the school.

I decided that we could run a post office within our school so that members of the school community could write letters to each other. We would be providing an important service to the school while at the same time fulfilling the children's need to act upon the information we had been gathering. The interrelatedness of the workers within the post office would become very clear once the children were running a post office themselves. Each member of the class would be necessary in order to make the post office work. Charlotte Winsor explains:

Perhaps most important of all in rounding out the goals of the social studies program is the opportunity to identify himself as a member of the group, a group ever expanding in its size as his knowledge of the world expands. A social studies program offers the child such opportunity at the very early stages when he has a chance to dramatize a role and so through his play begins to use vocabulary, gesture, strength in role playing, which somehow

gives him a sense of rehearsal of the role that he is to take as an adult.⁸

Running a post office at school was the missing piece in the study. Had I left it out, the children would still have learned a great deal about the post office. But my goal was not only for the children to learn about the post office and what's apparent, but also to make connections to other processes and relationships that exist. I wanted to provide the children with enough meaningful, in depth, concrete experiences which would allow them to make those leaps.

At City and Country School each group holds their job all year. The job becomes the driving force for the rest of their curriculum. The direction to follow for learning other things comes from the job. My purpose in running a post office was different. In my situation a temporary post office would be more practical and meaningful. Everyone in my class was involved in several duties during the running of the post office and a great deal of class time was devoted to this pursuit. A post office that ran all year would have to be the driving force behind the rest of the curriculum, as it is at City and Country School, or would have to be organized so that children took turns running the post office. As a culminating project for our study, the latter would not have provided the dramatic play for all the children at the most meaningful time.

I chose to run our post office as a microcosm of the post office we studied in our community. We did not sell U.S. postage

⁸Ibid., pp.398,399.

stamps or mail letters outside of the building. We were a self contained post office strictly for the school community. We were modeled after the U.S. Post Office, but we were designed as a separate entity.

The curriculum description that follows is not a description of the post office study in any particular year. Rather it includes aspects of the study that took place over the course of the three years that I have done it. Each group of children has focused on different aspects of the study. For one group, looking at stamps and creating their own stamps was a very fascinating piece. For another group, this was not as interesting as the sorting process. This group became very interested in sorting collections of keys or buttons into smaller and smaller categories. Each year the children lead the way. Next year's group may want to focus on something I haven't even thought of yet. I describe the curriculum, not as a recipe for duplicating, but rather as a work in progress, today and always.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRICULUM

The post office study is part of our year long study of the neighborhood and community as it is today, and as it was long ago. Before I describe the post office curriculum I will describe the work leading up to it.

We started in September by discussing what we thought a neighborhood is. The children said that a neighborhood is a place right where you live, where you know all the places in it and lots of the people too. The next day I told the children that we would be taking a walk around the neighborhood and I asked them to think about what we might see. As the children gave me their ideas I listed them on a chart. On our walk we took notes of the various places we saw and made sketches of some of them. Back at the classroom we added the buildings we had seen on our walk to our list of places in the neighborhood. We talked about how some places are for work and others are for recreation.

We talked about groups of people and how there are many different groups in a neighborhood for different reasons. Some of the children belonged to Brownies. Others said that the P.T.A. was a group that their parents belonged to. We made a long list of groups in the neighborhood and attempted to organize them into categories. They decided that the purpose of some of the groups was to have fun, whereas for others, the purpose was to work. Then there were still other groups that existed to do helpful things but you could still have fun at the same time. The P.T.A. holds a square dance to raise

money. The children felt that it was nice to be able to raise money for the school and have fun at the same time.

At this point we took more walks around the neighborhood. We looked in stores and took notes about what we saw. We made a map of one street in the neighborhood that had many stores, businesses, and offices on it. The children measured the distance of each store along the block using trundle wheels and meter sticks, and then transferred the information onto a large map. Measurement is one of the required topics in our science curriculum. Making the map was a perfect opportunity to use these skills.

We discussed the function of each of the buildings on the block and discovered that some sold goods, while others provided services. The children interviewed the people who work in the places along the block and reported back to the class the information they had learned. We made a list of people in a neighborhood and posted it on the bulletin board next to our list of places.

Up until this point in the study we were focusing on the built environment and the people who live and work there. I wanted to integrate our study of the neighborhood with the science curriculum even more, so we began to pay close attention to the natural environment. We did a study of trees, using the trees in the neighborhood and on the school grounds. The children became fascinated, not only with the trees, but also began collecting rocks and insects to examine in the classroom. I did not do a complete study of all the specimens that the children brought in. However, a number of children were able to do a miniature research project of

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their own, based on the format we used for learning about trees. The children culminated the tree study by writing a class book. They took turns borrowing the book to read to their families. I attached a page to the inside cover for readers' comments. Parents added their comments about the book so that by the end of the year we had two full pages of rave reviews. The book is now in the school library.

After the December vacation we reviewed the charts about the neighborhood that we had made. I asked the children to think about all the public places in the neighborhood. We defined public as places that belonged to everyone. After this we began to focus on the post office.

We made arrangements to visit the post office the following Tuesday afternoon. At this point I introduced how to write a friendly letter and how to address an envelope. We talked about zip codes and what they were used for. We looked at maps and found out where Glen Head is. We talked about how Glen Head is part of the Town of Oyster Bay which is part of Nassau County, which is part of Long Island, which is part of New York State... The children wrote letters to their parents which they would mail on our trip.

We predicted what we would see on our trip. Some of the children felt that they wouldn't learn anything new because they had visited the post office in kindergarten.

The post office is approximately four blocks from school. Using the map that I put on their trip sheets (Appendix D) we followed the map to the post office. The children were very excited once we got there. They bought a stamp, mailed a letter, and

watched what happened to their letters from the time they were mailed, to the time they were put on the truck. We also watched mail arrive at our post office. S. got to see postal workers put mail for her family on a shelf with her family's name on it. All the children who lived in Glen Head had an opportunity to see the shelf that had their family's name on it, and to see the letters waiting to be delivered to their house the next day. The children drew pictures of the equipment they saw and answered the questions on their trip sheet.

For the next few days we discussed what we had learned. Some of the meeting messages were:

"Let's think about what we saw and learned at the post office."

"Let's think about what happens when you mail a letter."

We discussed the jobs we saw people doing at the post office and what one would need to know in order to do these jobs. We talked about the equipment we saw and what each piece of equipment was for. We talked about how the post office was organized and hypothesized about why it might be organized that way. We talked about how the physical arrangement might help the workers to be efficient.

The first year that I did this study, I overheard some of the children in the class talking about how they wished they could work in the post office for a little while. One of the children's grandfathers had once worked in the post office as an extra helper at Christmas time. This discussion gave me the opportunity to present the idea of running a post office at school. I suggested that even

though we couldn't work at the U.S. Post Office, maybe we could find a way to see what it would be like. N. suggested that we could have a pretend post office in the classroom. I told the children that I liked that idea but maybe we could find a way to include Mrs. T.'s class in our post office, since they were learning about the post office too. We decided to have a meeting with Mrs. T.'s class to talk about it.

Out of this meeting came the idea that we could run a post office for the entire school. The children were very excited about it. Even though I knew that I wanted the children to run a post office for the school before we had the meeting, I wanted the children to feel that it was their idea.

At this point in the study during the second year, the children asked me if they could run a post office at school, just as the second grade had done the year before. Naturally I said yes. I was delighted that the idea to do it again had come from them. They were so enthusiastic. I had been concerned that they might not want to do a project that had been done the year before. In my third year at Glen Head School, my new group of second graders asked me on the first day of school if they could run a post office too.

We began planning our post office. We made two lists:

What We Need

What To Do

We got very busy making mail collection boxes, labeling shoe boxes for sorting the mail, making signs for the different stations, and advertisements. We had meetings with the two other

second grade classes. (I had asked Mr. C. and Mrs. T. if they would join me in running a post office and they agreed.)

The three classes decided on a name, a slogan and an emblem. (Appendix I). They called themselves,

The Second Grade Express-A first class post office.

The emblem was a flag with a letter carrier and a mail truck on it. Other years the children called themselves,

The Second Grade Junior Post Office-We deliver fast.

The Glen Head School Community Post Office-The only post office run by kids.

As we got closer to the opening date we abandoned our regular daily schedule in order to get everything ready on time. The children made signs showing the proper format for addressing an envelope. Someone writing a letter to me would address the envelope:

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Hours of operation were posted. We had an East, West, and a South station in the building. Each station had its own route. The children made mail boxes for every classroom, labeled them, and hung them up at each door. I made a map of the route for them to follow in order to find the right rooms. (Appendix E).

We talked about uniforms and why people wear them. We borrowed blue vests from the chorus and the children made badges with the emblem on it and pinned them to their uniforms.

Then came the stamps. (Appendix H). We collected as many stamps as we could in order to examine them. We looked in books

about stamp collecting. We made a list of what kinds of things they saw on stamps and discussed why something goes on a stamp. The conclusion was that a stamp could have anything you want to communicate, educate, celebrate, or honor. Then we talked about what our school post office might want to communicate, educate, celebrate, or honor and made a list of their suggestions.

We used mailing labels for stamps. The children drew a picture, labeled it and wrote 1¢. Each stamp was an original. At first the stamps were extraordinarily beautiful. The messages that the children put on them reflected their world and what was important to them. Some of the stamps read, "Recycle", "Take care of trees", "Eat a good breakfast", "Baseball", "School is cool". One year our post office project was taking place during the war in the Persian Gulf. Some of the children made stamps with a yellow ribbon and the words, "Come home!" Homework for two weeks was just to make stamps. After a while, the children realized that it was impractical to make every stamp a work of art and they began to mass produce them. They might do a whole sheet with the same picture and message. One child just put a smiling face on each stamp.

The first year that I did this study, the principal and I agreed that we would sell the stamps for a penny each. The second year, U.S. stamps had just gone up from 25¢ to 29¢. The children felt that we should raise our stamps to 2¢. Their request was denied, but I was enjoying watching the children get so involved in our work and take it so seriously.

The next piece of preparation was to decide what the jobs would be and practice them. They decided on the following:

<u>Jobs</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>
Sell stamps	4
Empty collection boxes	2
Cancel stamps	3
Sort the mail	4
Deliver the mail	2
Postmaster	The teacher

During math we practiced sorting buttons, bottle caps, macaroni, keys, and any other junk I could get my hands on. We studied money and practiced making change. This was very difficult for some of the children. I devised a money changer to help them. (Appendix F). Customers were not allowed to pay with anything larger than a quarter. If the customer gives the window clerk 25¢, the clerk looks for the 25¢ on the money changer. If the customer is buying 12 stamps, then the clerk covers 12¢ on the money changer using game pieces. Whatever is not covered is the change. This worked for most of the children. We decided that each window clerk would have a partner. One would make change while the other counted out the stamps. In this way all the children could have a chance to be a window clerk, even if they were developmentally incapable of making change. The third year that I did this we used calculators. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is advocating the teaching of calculators to children. This was certainly a very motivating time for them to learn it. While some

children were able to make change, for others it was slightly beyond their ability developmentally. The calculator was more appropriate for the majority of the children. We cut stamps into groups of 10, 5, 2, and single stamps. The children wrote announcements and read them over the public address system.

A few days before we opened the post office I showed the children an abridged list of rules and responsibilities and a code of ethics for postal workers that I had made based on a real postal workers manual. (Appendix G). We discussed what each item meant and then created our own code of ethics. The children came up with the following list of rules:

No fooling around while working.

Smile and say, "Thank you and have a nice day."

Handle the mail carefully and don't read any mail while working.

Do your own job and no one else's.

No giving away stamps for free.

During the second and third years that I did this study with my classes, we opened the post office during the week before our February vacation. We were open for business Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday morning, with a final delivery on Friday afternoon. Windows were open for half an hour in the morning and half an hour after lunch (except on Friday, when we were only open for stamp sales in the morning). Each station had its own collection box to empty. The stamps were canceled using ink pads and a homemade "rubber" stamp. We glued three pieces of string to a small piece of cardboard, and then attached a cork to the back of

the cardboard for a handle. The three pieces of string made three lines across the stamps that looked just like the cancellation marks at the real post office.

The sorters sorted the mail into shoe boxes. Each shoe box was labeled with classes on our route. Any mail that had no shoe box was put into a box marked *Out of Town Mail*. My class sent its out of town mail to Mrs. T.'s class. Mrs. T.'s class sent its out of town mail to Mr. C.'s class and Mr. C.'s class sent its out of town mail to my class. We included everyone in the building; custodians, secretaries, cooks, special teachers, etc. The sorting process required a lot of supervision. After the first year I made sure to remind the upper grades that envelopes cannot be addressed in cursive writing, as our postal workers can only read manuscript.

A certain amount of mail gets addressed incorrectly, or not at all. The first year, I spent a lot of time with this "dead mail" trying to figure out where it was going or to whom it should be returned. During the second and third years of the post office, this did not happen as often. The kindergarten teachers were able to monitor their children's letters a little better to make sure that there were addresses on them. We also had more signs up around the building reminding everyone how to address a letter.

Once the mail was sorted the letter carriers checked each shoebox to make sure the mail was sorted correctly. They wrapped each bundle of mail in a piece of paper that was labeled with its destination and then they put a rubber band around it. Using the map

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of our class' route, they placed each bundle of mail in their delivery bag in order. After I checked it for them they were on their way.

We delivered mail each day between 2:00 and 2:30 P.M. I loved watching the responses of the children in other classes as the mail was being delivered. A chorus of, "We have mail, we have mail!" could be heard around the school. We chose to deliver the mail at the end of the day to keep from disrupting the classes all day long.

Everyone was excited about receiving mail. Fifth graders were just as eager as kindergarteners. A custodian came by my room to tell me how delighted he was to have received a letter. With a smiling face he said, "I guess my homework tonight is to write back."

At the end of each day after the mail was delivered we made an announcement on the public address system about the post office. The following is one of the announcements:

This is a special announcement from The Glen Head School Community Post Office. The mail has been delivered. Please check your mailboxes. We will be open again tomorrow from 9:00 to 9:30 A.M. and from 12:45 to 1:15 P.M. Stamps cost a penny. It's cheap! It's fun! So we hope you'll stop by tomorrow at The Glen Head School Community Post Office- the only post office run by kids!

ANALYSIS OF THE POST OFFICE STUDY

A number of things happened during the post office study. The children were able to recreate their experience of visiting the post office and make the experience meaningful. They made plans and decisions and followed through on them. They encountered problems and worked cooperatively to solve them. The study was a model for any other study they might wish to do. The knowledge they gained about the way the post office functions is knowledge that can be transferred to new situations.

The children began by listing what they already knew. They raised questions about what they still wanted to find out. They listed sources for finding out that information. They used those sources which included both library and first hand research. They synthesized this new knowledge by reenacting the post office at school.

The post office study is so rich with possibility for integrating the curriculum. We read many books about the post office. *The Jolly Postman* has letters in it that the children can pull out of envelopes and read. One of the letters, written by Goldilocks to the three bears, is filled with errors. This is a great way to teach proof reading, punctuation, and capitalization. *From Path to Highway* is a story about the Boston Post Road and how it developed from Native American trails. This led into a discussion of the history of the post office. *Toddlecreek Post Office* is a lovely story about a post office that has to close because it doesn't get

enough business. It was a nice story to read on the last day of the post office.

We read riddles, poems, and sang songs related to mail and letters. (Appendices A,B, and C.) We learned about money, making change, using a calculator, sorting, and classifying. We learned about using a scale to weigh letters and packages, although our post office did not deliver packages.

We made a list of all the reasons why people might write letters. We discussed how our post office was an opportunity to let people know that we appreciate them. I wrote every child in my class a letter letting them know that I think they are special and very glad to have them in my class. This was an opportunity for me to help build self esteem among my students. The children painted pictures of the post office and the community and made a mural about how mail gets to its destination.

The entire school became very involved in letter writing. Children wrote letters to the custodians thanking them for cleaning our room. The cooks received letters listing the children's favorite lunches. I received mail from last year's class letting me know how delighted they were that I was running the post office again (Appendix J). The other teachers in the building also became involved. One teacher who likes to do pranks sent another teacher an envelope full of junk from his desk, (old forks, broken rulers, crayons, old paper clips and pencils) and labeled it "junk mail". Teachers wrote letters to the second grade classes to tell them how much they liked this project. Parents sent mail to their children

through the post office, and some even sent notes to the teacher that the children would ordinarily give to the teacher in the morning.

Some of the older children bought stamps just to collect them because they were so cute. The amount of letter writing that took place during the post office week was astounding. We took in \$60.00 between the three classes which means we sold 6,000 stamps and delivered approximately 4,000 letters in the three and a half days.

We had a discussion about what to do with the money. Each of the years that I've done this, at least one child has felt that we should split up the money since we worked so hard. This led to a discussion of how postal workers get paid, what happens to the money from stamps at the U.S. Post Office, and what taxes are. We talked about gross income and net income. If we had to pay for the space, the utilities, and the supplies that we used, would we have earned any money? After lots of computing it turned out that we would not have earned money if we'd had to pay for our expenses. D. suggested that probably we would have had to charge about 29¢ per stamp in order to make a profit. A decision was made the first two years to give the money to an animal shelter. The third year we gave it to a local soup kitchen. One of the volunteers from the soup kitchen came to talk to the children about how the money from the post office would be used and how important it is for community members to help each other.

When I first presented the idea to run a post office at school to my principal she was enthusiastic about the idea but she was worried that I might be taking on a project that was too large. She

limited the post office to kindergarten through the fourth grade. At that time we were a K-6 school and the 5th and 6th graders felt left out. After the success of the first year, I was allowed to do it again with the whole school involved.

When I told Mrs. T. that I wanted to run a post office at school, she was skeptical and not sure that she wanted to get involved. The idea seemed rather crazy to her. Reluctantly, Mrs. T. agreed to try it with me although she was very worried about it. After the success of the first year she told me she definitely wanted to do it again. Mr. C. joined us the second year, after seeing how well it went.

The third year the post office spread even further. Ms. G., a second grade teacher at another school in the district, ran a post office with her class. I get together regularly with Ms. G. to share ideas and talk about curriculum. Now the principal's daughter is joining us for these meetings. She is a second grade teacher at a school in a neighboring district and she is interested in running a post office at her school. The spread of this study and the enthusiasm that has been generated by it is very exciting to me.

The first year that I did this study I ran the post office in March. The second year, having done it once before, I was ready to run the post office in February. The six weeks between our December vacation and our school's February break was the perfect amount of time to learn about, prepare for, and run the post office. It just happened to fall at the same time as Valentine's Day. Mr. C. agreed to join us only if we did it at Valentine's Day. He has always

taken his class for a walk to the post office just before Valentine's Day so the children could mail valentines to their parents. To him, the only logical time to study the post office is at Valentine's Day. Mrs. T. also likes the idea of linking the post office with Valentine's Day because so many teacher magazines produce worksheets that have to do with Valentine's Day and mail.

The third year I would have preferred to run the post office in December so that there would be more continuity between my study of the neighborhood and the study of the post office. The December vacation would have been a logical time to end our focus on the community. The six weeks between the December vacation and the February break could have been used to focus on life in Glen Head long ago, beginning with the Native Americans. After the February break our long ago focus could have continued with life in Glen Head around 1880.

I like sharing curriculum ideas with my colleagues and I like the fact that the post office has become a second grade study and a school event, not just something that my class does. However, by sharing it with my colleagues, I have given up control over it. The post office and Valentine's Day are connected in the eyes of my colleagues, so I can no longer control the timing of it.

I view my year's curriculum as a work in progress, always subject to change as I learn more. I also like curriculum to be flexible enough to follow the interests of the children as much as is practical. I will now have to plan my year's curriculum keeping in

mind that the month of January and the first two weeks in February are reserved for the post office.

It is possible that one year I may have a group of children who would rather not focus on the post office at all. Maybe the local supermarket or bakery would be more fascinating to them. I would like to think that in a case like that I could follow the children's lead. I don't know what will happen if the situation should arise. How will my second grade colleagues feel about not doing the post office? How will the rest of the school feel about it? Would the other second graders run a post office without my class, while my class studies something else? I guess I will have to cross that bridge when I come to it. I don't have an easy answer.

Running the post office at Valentine's Day has both advantages and disadvantages. Valentine's Day is not a holiday that I would generally choose to emphasize. However, it is a big part of the culture of this school so I really can't ignore it. The principal and the specialist teachers send valentines to all of the children. This is good because children who otherwise might not get that much mail end up getting more mail because of the valentines.

Of course some children get a lot more mail than others. This is a problem no matter when the post office is held. I have discussed this problem with other teachers in the building. Most of the lower grade teachers are sensitive to this and make sure that everyone in their classes gets at least one letter or card each day. The upper grade children write more letters and tend to get responses. Their teachers tell me that it hasn't been a problem.

After the first day most of the children start to realize that the more letters they write, the more responses they will get.

Teachers can tell which children in their classes are not likely to receive much mail. In my class, I knew that N. would not receive that much mail. N. is the kind of child who punches other children for no reason. He is less mature than most second graders and not the children's first choice for a playmate. I wrote a few extra letters to N..

Next year I would like to arrange two post office trips. We visited our local post office and saw a video that showed what happens at the main post office in an area. I would like to take the children to the Hicksville Post Office, which is the main post office in the area of my school.

If we held our post office in early December, I would have the children keep a photographic record of the study and then write a book about it afterward. There isn't enough time to do that in February. The day after our post office closes is our February break. When we return, I prefer to begin a new study. The post office is over. Writing a book when we come back would drag it out too long.

In the future I would like to include block building as an integral part of the study. After each trip the children would use the blocks as a means of recreating the experience right away. The block building would be an excellent intermediate step between the post office visits and the running of our own post office. Building with blocks allows children to reenact in a physical way what they have learned, and would also be an opportunity for me to assess

which concepts the children have understood, and which ones require further experiences.

I still do not have blocks in my room. The kinds of experiences with blocks of which I am thinking require a place for us to keep blocks up over long periods of time. We cannot just use the blocks in the kindergarten room while they are at music and then put them all away 20 minutes later. I have ordered table blocks for next year. They are smaller versions of the standard blocks and they are less expensive. I was able to purchase many more of these than if I had ordered the standard size starter set. Next year I will try to incorporate block building into the study.

I was asked by my principal to speak at a parent meeting about the post office study. The parents had been enthusiastic about it while it was going on because their children were so excited. But when they heard my explanation of how much learning took place, they gave me so much positive feedback. Through this study I was able to communicate to a very diverse group of parents how a study of this nature is not only a very valuable use of class time, but also a lot more effective than reading about a post office in a social studies textbook. And in the process we did reading, writing, math, science, spelling, language arts, study skills, problem solving, planning, decision making, economics, history, communication, poetry, music, art, and cooperative learning.

When we ended the post office the children were a little sad that it was over, but they also felt an enormous sense of accomplishment. They had designed and run their own post office

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very successfully. As I was saying good-bye to the children on the last day of the post office, E. said to me, "Ms. Ribner, what are we going to study next?"

SEQUENCE OF MEETINGS

Topic: Opening Meeting- The children's ideas about the post office.

Message: Let's share what we know about the post office.

Comments: Make a chart listing everything the children have to say about the post office. Note that not everything the children say will be accurate. I list everything they have to say, accurate or not, but I make a point of giving the children opportunities to correct any misconceptions at some point during the study.

The children's responses may include some of the following:

The post office is where you buy stamps.

The post office delivers the mail.

The post office is where "mailmen" work.

The post office is where you go if you want to mail a package.

There are lots of post offices.

You can buy return address labels there.*

If you don't have someone's address, the post office has books that you can look up addresses in.*

* (These are examples of responses given by children that are not accurate.)

At story time read *The Jolly Postman*.

Topic: Research Methods: Generating a list of questions for study.

Message: Let's think about what we would like to learn about the post office.

Comments: List the questions that the children come up with about the post office. Their questions may resemble the following:

How much mail does the post office deliver every day?

Can you send a letter anywhere in the whole world?

How long would it take for a letter to get to the North Pole?

Who runs the post office?

What happens if someone addresses a letter wrong?

How do you get to be a "mailman"?

Do you have to go to school to learn to be a "mailman"?

Is it a hard job?

What happens if people have messy handwriting on an envelope?

What is the biggest package that was ever delivered?

How do they make sure that the mail gets to the right person?

What if two people have the same name and they live near each other?

How come some letter carriers carry a bag, some push a wagon and some drive a truck?

How do they sort the mail?

*Children automatically use the word, "mailman". I point out that women can deliver mail too and therefore a better word to use is mail carrier or letter carrier.

At story time read *My Mother the Mail Carrier-Mi Mama La Cartera*.

Topic: Research Methods-Sources for finding information.

Message: Let's think about how we can find out the answers to our questions about the post office.

Comments: The children's answers may resemble the following:

Ask a letter carrier.

Go to the post office and ask the people who work there.

Read books about the post office.

Look in an encyclopedia.

Watch a television show about it.

Watch a letter carrier at work.

Look in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Talk to an expert about mail.

Maybe someone's parents work in the post office and they could tell us things.

Write letters to the post office and ask them all our questions and maybe they'll write back and tell us.

Do research.

Look in magazines.

Watch a film about the post office.

Read a newspaper.

Look at pictures.

Watch a television program about it.

Work at the job for a while and you will learn how to do it.

Look at the mail that comes to your house.

Read what it says on the mailboxes on the street.

At story time read *The Postman*.

Topic: Writing a friendly letter.

Message: Today we will learn how to write a letter.

Comments: At this meeting teach the children the proper format for writing a friendly letter. They will write letters to their parents which will be mailed during the trip to the post office.

The book, *SWAK* has sample letters and envelopes as well as fun things to write on the back of an envelope such as,

“Through rain, sleet,
and any bad weather
Please Mr. Postman
Deliver this letter.”

I enlarged these pages from the book so the children could work from a sample on their tables instead of having to refer to the blackboard.

Give children time to take turns reading *Messages in the Mailbox: How To Write a Letter.*

At story time read *Your Best Friend Kate.*

Topic: Zip Codes

Message: Today at meeting we will talk about zip codes. What are they? What are they used for?

The children's answers may resemble the following:

A zip code is part of the address.

A zip code is numbers at the end of your address.

If you live near someone then probably you will have the same zip code.

The zip code makes the mail get where it's going faster.

Comments: Look at a zip code map and find Glen Head on the map. Look at a zip code directory and show the children how it's used.

At story time read *First Class! The Postal System in Action*.

Topic: Trip to the Post Office

Message: Let's think about what we will see on our trip to the post office.

Comments: Make a chart listing the children's ideas about what we will see on our trip. The children's responses may resemble the following:

I think we will see lots of mail.

I think we will see mail trucks.

I think we will see computers.

I think we will see stamps.

I think we will see scales.

I think we will see mailboxes.

I think we will see the people who work there.

I think we will see counters.

I think we will see a cash register.

I think we will see large bags full of mail.

At story time read *Simon Boom Gets A Letter*.

Topic: Post Office Trip

Message: Today we will take our trip to the post office. At meeting we will review our trip sheet.

Comments: At meeting read through the trip sheet with the children. This helps to remind the children of the purpose for taking the trip. There is a map on the first page of the trip sheet that shows the route from the school to the post office. Talk about which directions you are walking in, to get to the post office.

At the post office each child buys a stamp and mails a letter to his or her parents. Then the postal workers show the children what happens to the letter from the time it is mailed to the time it is put on the truck. We also watch mail arriving at the post office and we see the postal workers sorting the mail and preparing it for the following day's delivery.

The children spend about 15 minutes working on their trip sheets. The trip sheet helps the children to focus their attention and to remember more of what they see.

At story time read *A Visit to the Post Office*.

Topic: Trip follow-up

Message: Let's think about what we saw and learned at the post office.

Comments: The children's responses may resemble the following:

I saw mail being taken off the truck.

I saw people selling stamps.

I saw the platform that goes up and down with mail bags on it.

I saw the shelf with my last name on it.

I saw mail for Glen Head School.

I saw the sorting cases.

I saw a cash register that was a computer and a scale.

I saw the table in the middle of the room for sorting.

I saw the tower that they use for magazines.

I saw the brown bags for vacation mail.

At story time read *I Want To Be A Postal Clerk*.

Topic: Sequence of events when a letter is mailed.

Message: Let's think about what happens to a letter after you mail it.

Comments: At this meeting review what happens to a letter from the time it is mailed, to the time it arrives at its destination in sequence. Put the children's responses on a chart.

At story time read *What Happens When You Mail a Letter*.

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Topic: Post Office-Sequence of Events When a Letter is Mailed

Message: Today at meeting we will see a film about the post office.

Comments: Show the film, *Your Town, The Post Office*.

Ask the children what they remember from the film. Discuss how the post offices in the film are different from or the same as the post office we visited. Review the sequence of events that take place from the time a letter is mailed to its arrival at its destination.

Topic: Postal Workers-Jobs

Message: Let's think about the jobs that we saw people doing at the post office.

Comments: The following is a list of responses that my class gave me after our trip to the post office:

Mr. C.- postmaster

Frank- manager

Charlie- sells stamps

Fred- canceled the stamps, sorted the mail, lifted sacks of mail,

Nancy- sorted the mail, loaded the truck

Joe- sorted the mail for his route, delivered the mail

At story time read *Careers with the Postal Service*.

Topic: Jobs

Message: Let's think about all the workers at the post office. What do you think they need to know in order to do their jobs?

Comments: At this meeting discuss the kinds of skills a person would have to have in order to work at the post office. The children's answers may resemble the following:

Reading

Writing

Computers

Money

Making change

Math

Weighing

They have to be strong to lift heavy mailbags.

At story time read *Post Office Book: Mail and How it Moves*.

Topic: Physical arrangement of the post office.

Message: Let's think about why the post office is set up the way it is. Why did they put things where they put them? How does this arrangement help the workers to do their jobs?

Some responses that my class gave me were:

They put the counters there for people to put stamps on their letters.

They put the mail in the back so that nobody could take it.

They put the big table in the middle of the back room so that they could empty the mail sacks and lots of people could stand around and help.

I think they put the cubby holes there so that there would be a place to sort the mail.

I didn't think the stamp canceling machine was in a good place because people who work at the post office could bump into it.

I think they need a little more room in the back to work.

I think they need more room in the front because at Christmas time it gets very crowded at the post office and the people waiting on line are all squished.

At story time read *Mr. Grigg's Work*.

Topic: Equipment

Message: What equipment did we see people using at the post office?

Some of the children's responses may resemble the following:

They had computers and cash registers.

They had a stamp canceling machine.

They had a moving platform.

They had trucks.

They had racks on wheels that had mail boxes on it.

They had stamps on display in a showcase.

They had cubbies.

They had mailboxes.

They had a machine that sells stamps.

They had post office boxes for people who don't want the mail to come to their house.

They had big baskets

In the movie there was that machine that read all the zip codes (optical character reader) and the machine that sorted the mail after the zip code was read (bar code sorter).

They also had in the movie that machine that hands the letters to the workers every second so that they can type in the zip code.

Comments: Discuss each piece of equipment and what it is used for.

At story time read *Postal Workers A to Z*.

Topic: Planning our Post Office

Message: What do we need to think about if we are going to run a post office?

At this meeting make two lists:

What We Need

large boxes
rubber stamps
stamp pads
bags for delivering
money box
tables and chairs
crayons
scissors
glue
rubber bands
markers
coins for making change
calculators

What To Do

label shoe boxes for sorting
paint large boxes for mailboxes
make stamps
make signs
write an announcement

At story time read *Katie Morag Delivers the Mail*.

Topic: Planning our post office.

Message: Let's think about what jobs will need to be done in our post office.

Comments: During this meeting the children will make a list of jobs that will need to be done in order to run the post office. We came up with the following:

<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Job Description</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>
Window Clerk	Sells stamps	4
Mail "Truck Driver"	Empties mailboxes	2
Cancellation Machine Operator	Cancels stamps	3
Mail Sorter	Sorts the Mail	4
Mail Carrier	Delivers the mail	2
Postmaster	Runs the post office	The Teacher

At story time read *Dear Mr. Blueberry*.

Topic: Selecting a name for the post office.

Message: Let's think of a name for our post office.

Comments: The children contribute ideas for the name which you write on the board. When there is no more room to write any more suggestions ask the children to think about the names that are on the board. Can any of them be eliminated? The children have to explain why they think a name should be eliminated. Ask the other children if they agree to eliminate that name. As you get down to 2 or 3 names, help the children discuss the names that are left and try to come to a consensus. All three years that I've done this, we were able to combine two of the names into a name and a slogan. (I held this meeting with all 3 classes that were participating in the post office.)

At story time read *Little Lost Dog*.

Topic: Selecting an Emblem for our Post Office

Message: Look at the pictures of emblems that are on the board. Let's think about an emblem for our post office.

Comments: The three classes get together to suggest ideas to put on an emblem. Just as you did with the name, discuss each of the suggestions for the emblem. Once an idea for an emblem is chosen, all the children draw an emblem. The teachers choose one from each of their classes. The whole group chooses an emblem from these three drawings. It's important to stress that an emblem should be very simple.

At story time read *Dear Daddy*.

Topic: Stamps

Message: Let's think about why we have stamps.

Some of my children's responses were:

Stamps make the envelope prettier.

Stamps make looking at mail more interesting for the letter carriers.

The post office has to have stamps so that they have money for the things they need. It's expensive to buy all of those machines.

The stamps are needed because they have to be paid.

Read *Stamps, A New True Book*.

Topic: Stamps

Message: Look through the stamp books that are on the tables. What kinds of things can go on a stamp?

Comments: Give the children time to look through stamp books and examine as many stamps as the class can gather. Help the children to develop a list of things that they have seen on stamps. The final idea that I want them to come away with is that stamps can have anything you want to communicate, educate, celebrate, or honor.

At story time read *Please Excuse Jasper*.

Topic: Stamps

Message: Let's think about what we might want to say on our stamps?

The following is a list of ideas that the children had for stamps:

Baseball, Flowers, Puppies, Ice cream, Summer, School is Cool, Take Care of Trees, Recycle, Do your Homework, Be Kind to Animals, Eat a Good Breakfast, Smile, Valentine's Day, Love, Parents, Sisters, Brothers, Colors, Rainbows, Sports, Story time, Read, We Love Books, Gym, Art, Music, Library, Science, Birthdays, Don't Smoke, Football, Presents, Trips, Peace, Families, Friends, Playground, Reading Week, Holidays, Just Say No!, Books, Christmas, Write Letters!.

Comments: The children make stamps for homework and/or in school.

At story time read *The Post Office Cat*.

Topic: History of the Post Office

Message: Today at meeting we will talk about how the post office began.

Read the book, *From Path to Highway* to the children and talk about the beginnings of the post office.

Topic: History of the Post Office

Message: Today at meeting we will read more about how the post office began.

Comments: Read portions of the book *Read About the Postman* to the children and talk about the beginnings of the post office.

Topic: History of the Post Office

Message: Today at meeting we will read more about how the post office began.

Comments: Read the book *Special Delivery* to the children and talk about the beginnings of the post office.

Topic: History of the Post Office

Message: Today at meeting we will read more about how the post office began.

Comments: Read the book, *The Story of the Pony Express* and talk about the beginnings of the post office.

Topic: Uniforms

Message: Let's think about why people wear uniforms.

Comments: The children will contribute their ideas about uniforms.

The children's answers may resemble the following:

They look neater in a uniform.

They won't get their real clothes dirty.

Uniforms are cheaper than real clothes so they don't have to buy so many clothes and they can save money.

Uniforms let people know that someone works for the post office.

Sometimes people wear uniforms to protect themselves like a fire fighter or a soldier.

At story time read *What the Mailman Brought*.

Topic: Writing a Commercial

Message: Today we will write a commercial for our post office.

Comments: Choose a committee of children to write a commercial to be read over the public address system.

At story time read *Arthur's Penpal*.

Topic: Post Office Planning

Message: Today at meeting we will talk about what is left to do before we can open our post office.

Comments: This is a meeting to determine what is left to be done. By discussing this with the children, they feel a sense of ownership of the project.

At story time read *Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea*.

Topic: Letter Writing

Message: Let's think about why people write letters.

Additional questions: When might you prefer to talk to someone through a letter rather than in person? When might you write to someone you don't know?

Some of the responses may resemble the following:

People write to their friends who live far away.

People write to their cousins and grandparents who live far away.

People send birthday invitations.

People send thank you notes.

People write letters when they go on vacation.

Children write to their parents when they go to sleep away camp.

Sometimes people write to magazines and newspapers.

You can write a letter if you want to buy something through the mail.

If you don't have a lot of time you could write a post card.

At Christmas time people send Christmas cards.

You could send people birthday cards.

My sister joined a fan club through the mail.

People pay bills through the mail.

Sometimes on television they tell you to write to them.

Comments: Discuss what is different about a letter from other forms of communication, and what kinds of communication might letters be better for. I want the children to think about how a letter can be used to say things that you might not ordinarily say in person. Try to include the idea that people write to their members of congress.

At story time read *Arthur Goes to Camp*.

Topic: Friendship

Message: Let's think about how our post office could help us to be better friends.

Following are some of the responses that my class gave:

We could write letters to our friends.

We could say nice things to each other.

We could invite someone over in a letter.

We could thank our friends for being nice to us.

If you haven't been nice to someone you could apologize in a letter.

At story time read *Dear Annie*.

Topic: Importance of the Post Office

Message: Let's think about why the post office is important to a neighborhood.

The following are responses that my class gave:

It's important because if you didn't have a post office you wouldn't be able to get any mail.

You might have to travel far away just to mail a letter.

It's important because if you didn't have a post office, not everybody has a Fax machine and anyway it's too expensive to always use a Fax machine.

Everybody has to have a post office because then they wouldn't be able to pay their bills or they would have to drive to the phone company and the electric company to pay their bills and they would be wasting a lot of gas.

At story time read *A Letter to the King*.

Topic: Code of Behavior for Postal Workers

Message: Today at meeting we will read the code of behavior for post office employees.

Comments: Read the abridged code of behavior from a real post office manual and discuss what each item means and why it might be important.

At story time read *Hail to Mail*.

Topic: Code of Behavior for Postal Workers

Message: Let's think about a code of behavior for our post office employees.

Comments: Based on the code of behavior that was read yesterday, help the children develop a code of behavior for themselves. The children could begin their thinking about this as a homework assignment the night before this meeting.

Some of the responses that my class gave were:

No fooling around while working.

Smile and say, "Thank you and have a nice day."

Handle the mail carefully and don't read any mail while working.

Do your own job and no one else's.

No giving away stamps for free.

At story time read *Frederick Ferdinand Fox*.

Ribner
May 1992
65

Topic: Running the Post Office.

Message: Let's talk about how our post office is going so far.

Comments: During the running of the post office the meetings can focus on whatever needs or problems arise.

Some additional books for story time :

Cissy Lavender

Love From Aunt Betty

The following lessons should be done after running the post office:

Topic: Money

Message: Today at meeting we will count the money from our post office and decide what to do with it.

Comments: Using counting cups to make groups of ten, we count the money. Make a list of ideas that the children have for what to do with the money. Some of the children in my classes have suggested that they should keep the money because they worked so hard. This is why I discuss profit at the next meeting.

Topic: Profit

Message: Today at meeting we will talk about profit.

Comments: Discuss gross income, net income, expenses and profit. Estimate your expenses and calculate what your net income would be if you had paid for your supplies, including rent, utilities, heat etc. When calculations are made this way, it should become clear that there really wasn't any profit.

Many of the children think that the postal workers count the money at the end of the day and split it up. They need to know that stamps are taxes that help to pay for the costs of running the post office and for the workers' salaries, but they don't split up the money at the end of the day.

Topic: Evaluating the Project

Message: Today at meeting we will talk about our post office. What worked well? What didn't work well? How could we improve it?

The following are some of the responses from my classes:

I think it worked well except sometimes so many people came to buy stamps at one time.

Maybe we should give each class a time to come so it won't be so crowded.

But then it wouldn't be like a real post office. It's crowded at the real post office on Saturdays because everyone has time to go.

I liked delivering the mail the best. It was fun.

I liked delivering the mail and selling stamps. The other jobs were okay too but these were the best.

I thought it was fun making stamps at first but then I really got tired of it. A real post office would Xerox them or something like that.

I liked writing letters to my sister and getting letters back.

I liked getting letters from the teachers.

I wrote 16 letters and I got a lot of mail too.

I think we should sort the mail earlier in the day because it was kind of a rush to do it in the afternoon.

I think we should run the post office all year long. What are people going to do now that there is no post office?

We couldn't run it all year long because we wouldn't have time for anything else. And anyway, I don't think we could make that many stamps. We'd probably need a million of them.

Ribner
May 1992
68

A billion!

A trillion!

I really liked doing this and it was more fun than anything else we've done.

I liked it better than gym!

I think you should do it again next year.

Yes definitely do it again!

Read *Toddlecreek Post Office*.

APPENDICES

- A. Riddles
- B. Poetry
- C. Songs
- D. Trip Sheet
- E. Route Map
- F. Money Changer
- G. Responsibilities of Postal Workers
- H. Stamps
- I. Emblems
- J. Letters
- K. Publicity
- L. Curriculum Web for Post Office Study
- M. Photographs

Appendix A-Riddles

(A)

Mail Riddles

Question: What word has hundreds of letters in it?
Answer: Mailbox

Question: What kind of stamp is the tastiest?
Answer: One in mint condition.

Question: What kind of letters did Rapunzel like best?
Answer: Hairmail.

Question: What does an envelope say when you lick it?
Answer: Not one word. It just shuts up.

Question: Why did the foolish man keep his stamps on the bed?
Answer: Because he bought them in sheets.

Question: What did the lovesick stamp say to the envelope?
Answer: "I'm stuck on you."

Question: Why did the foolish man chew up the stamp?
Answer: It had gum on the back.⁹

Question: What did the letter say to the stamp?
Answer: Stick to me and we'll go places.¹⁰

⁹From Harelson, Randy. *SWAK: The Complete Book of Mail Fun for Kids*. New York: Workman Publishing, 1981.

¹⁰From Smollin, Richard. *Tickle Yourself with Riddles Again*. New York: Random House, 1979.

Appendix B-Poetry

(B)

Poetry

STAMPS

You can lick 'em
 and stick 'em
And send them away;
Or keep 'em on hinges
 In an album's okay.

You can trade 'em
 parade 'em
Or save 'em forever;
Compare 'em and share 'em,
 most any endeavor.

You can buy 'em
 or sale 'em,
From most anywhere;
Collect every color
 and size to compare.

You can display 'em
 or lay 'em
Under a lamp.
What are they? I'll tell you:
The Postage Stamp!

Linda G. Paulsen

THANK YOU NOTE

I wanted small pierced earrings
(gold).
You gave me slippers (gray).
My mother said that she would
scold
Unless I wrote to say how much I
liked them.

Not much.

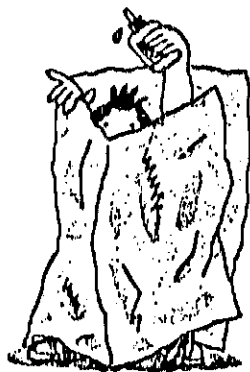
Judith Viorst

Appendix C-Songs

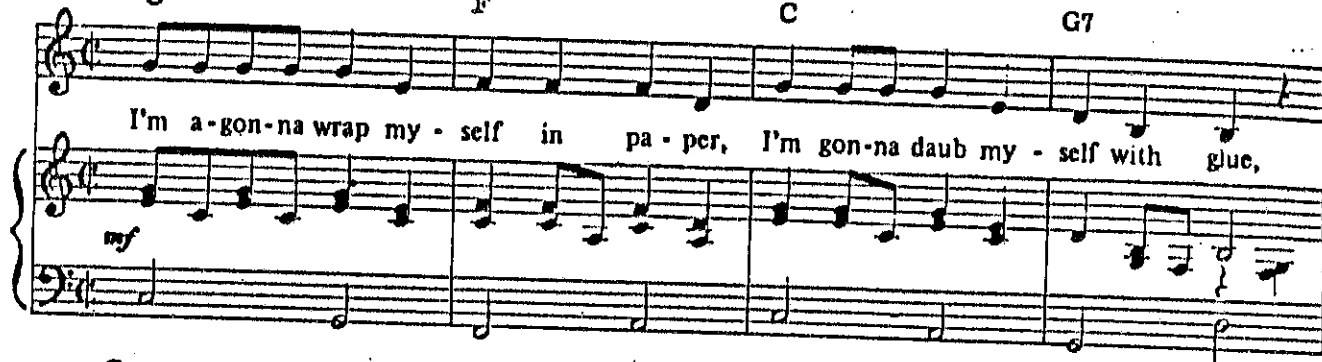
Mail Myself to You

WORD AND MUSIC BY WOODY GUTHRIE

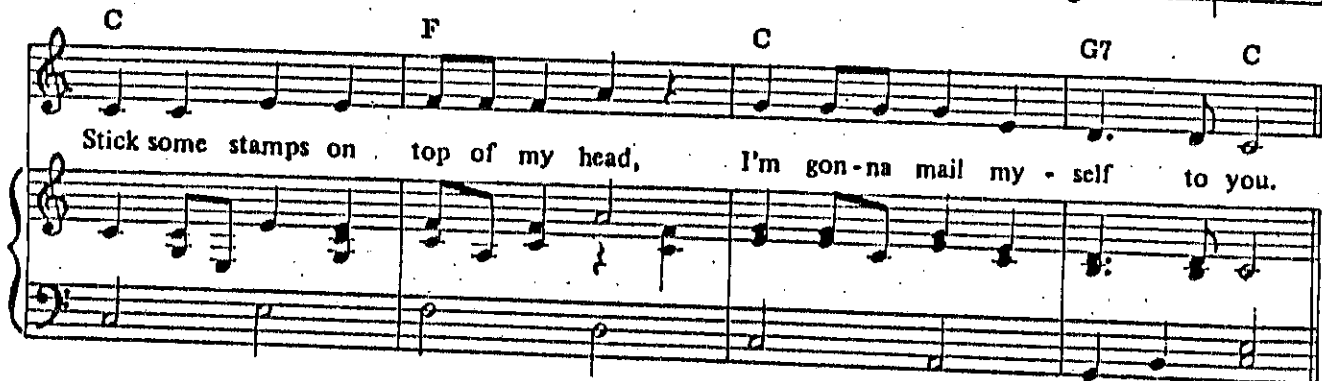
MAIL MYSELF TO YOU, Words and Music by Woody Guthrie./ TRO © Copyright 1962 and 1963
Ludlow Music, Inc., New York, NY. Used by Permission.



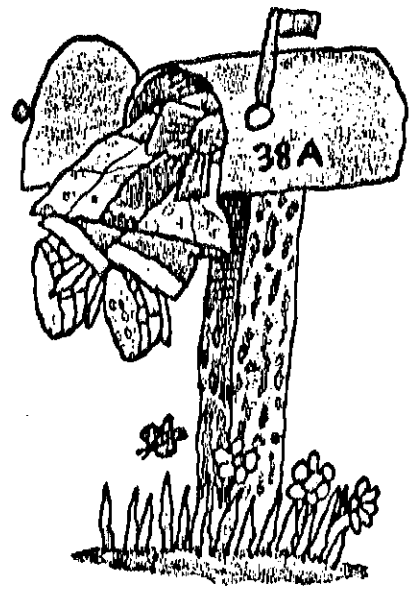
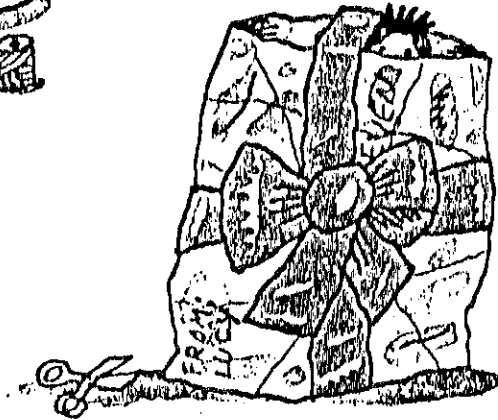
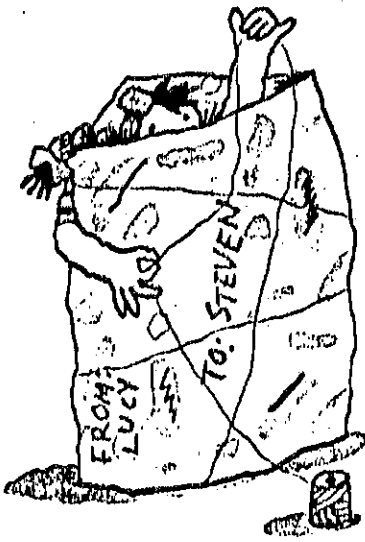
C F C G7



I'm a-gon-na wrap my - self in pa - per, I'm gon-na daub my - self with glue,



C F C G7 C
Stick some stamps on top of my head, I'm gon-na mail my - self to you.



C G7 C G7

I'm a-gon-na tie me up in a red string, I'm gon-na tie blue rib-bons too,

C F C G7 C

I'm a-gon-na climb up in my mail-box, I'm gon-na mail my-self to you.

C F C

When you see me in your mail - box, Cut the string and
 Take me out of my wrap - ping pa - per, Wash the stamps —

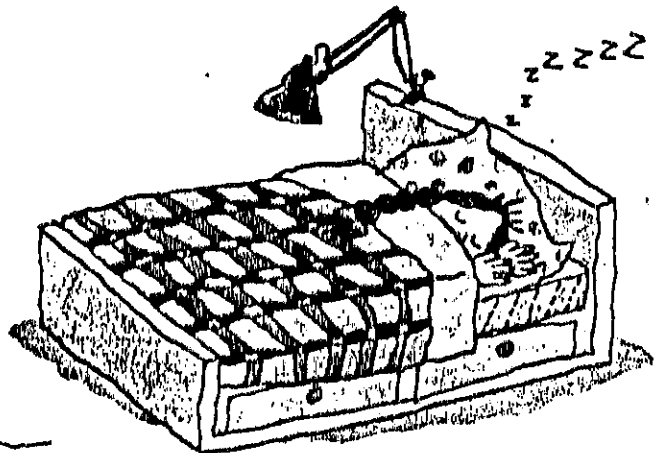
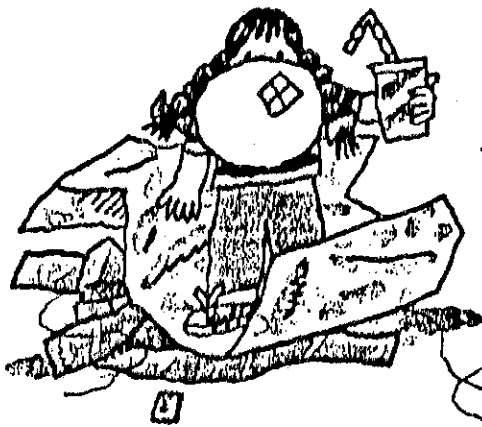
G7 C F

let me out, Wash the glue off my fin - gers,
 off my head, Pour me full of ice cream so - dies,

C

1. G7 C	2. G7 C
---------	---------

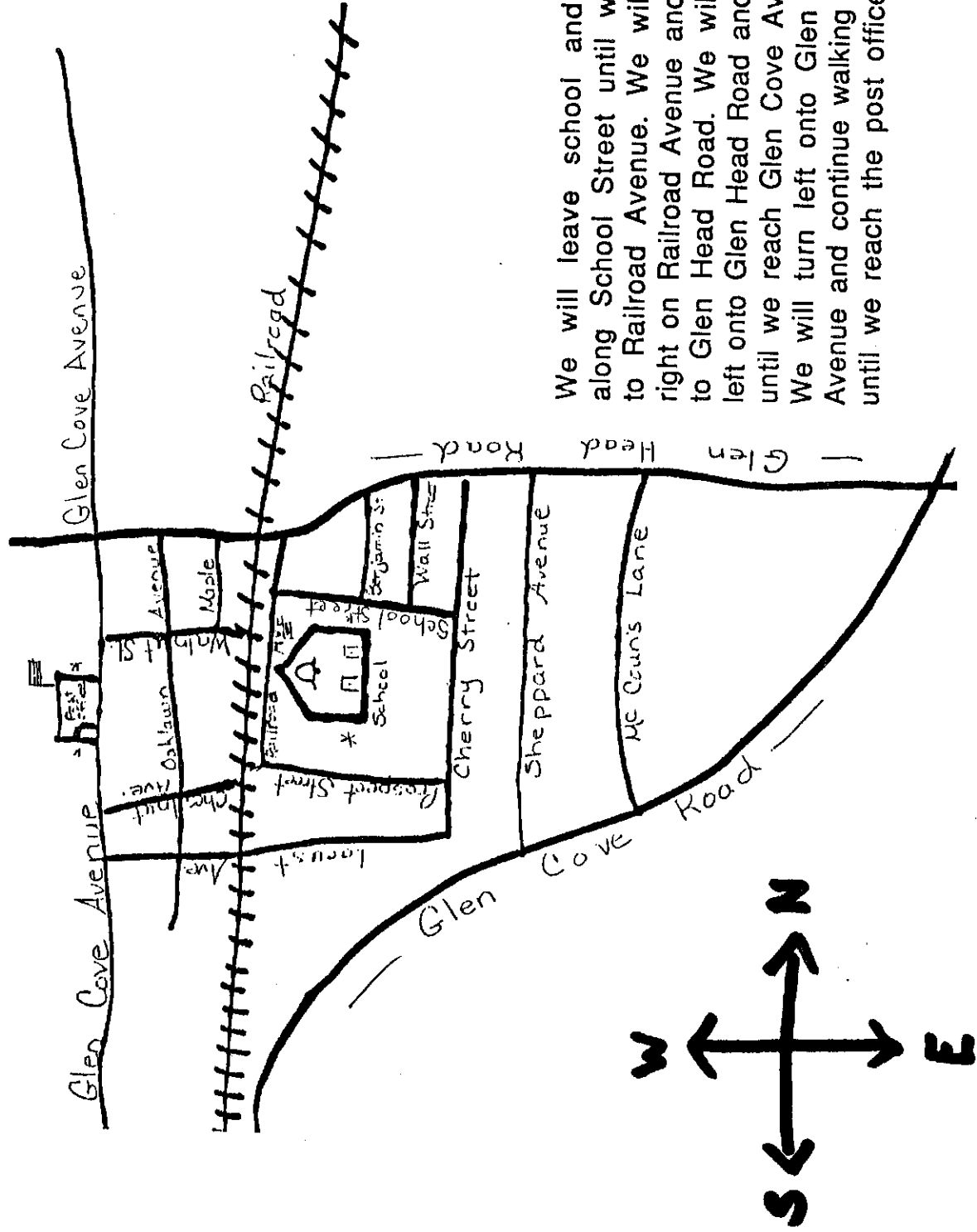
Stick some bub - ble gum in my mouth.
 Put me in my nice warm bed.



Ribner
May 1992
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Appendix D-Trip Sheet

COMMUNITY STUDY - POST OFFICE TRIP



We will leave school and walk along School Street until we get to Railroad Avenue. We will turn right on Railroad Avenue and walk to Glen Head Road. We will turn left onto Glen Head Road and walk until we reach Glen Cove Avenue. We will turn left onto Glen Cove Avenue and continue walking along until we reach the post office.

(D)

Name _____

1. Name some of the jobs that you see people doing.

2. If you mailed a letter from the post office which workers would handle it before it left the post office?

3. What parts of the post office help the workers to sort the mail?

(D)

Name _____

4. Draw a picture of at least three pieces of equipment that you see. Include at least one that you have never seen before. Label your drawings.

5. What was your favorite part about the post office?

Appendix E-Route Map

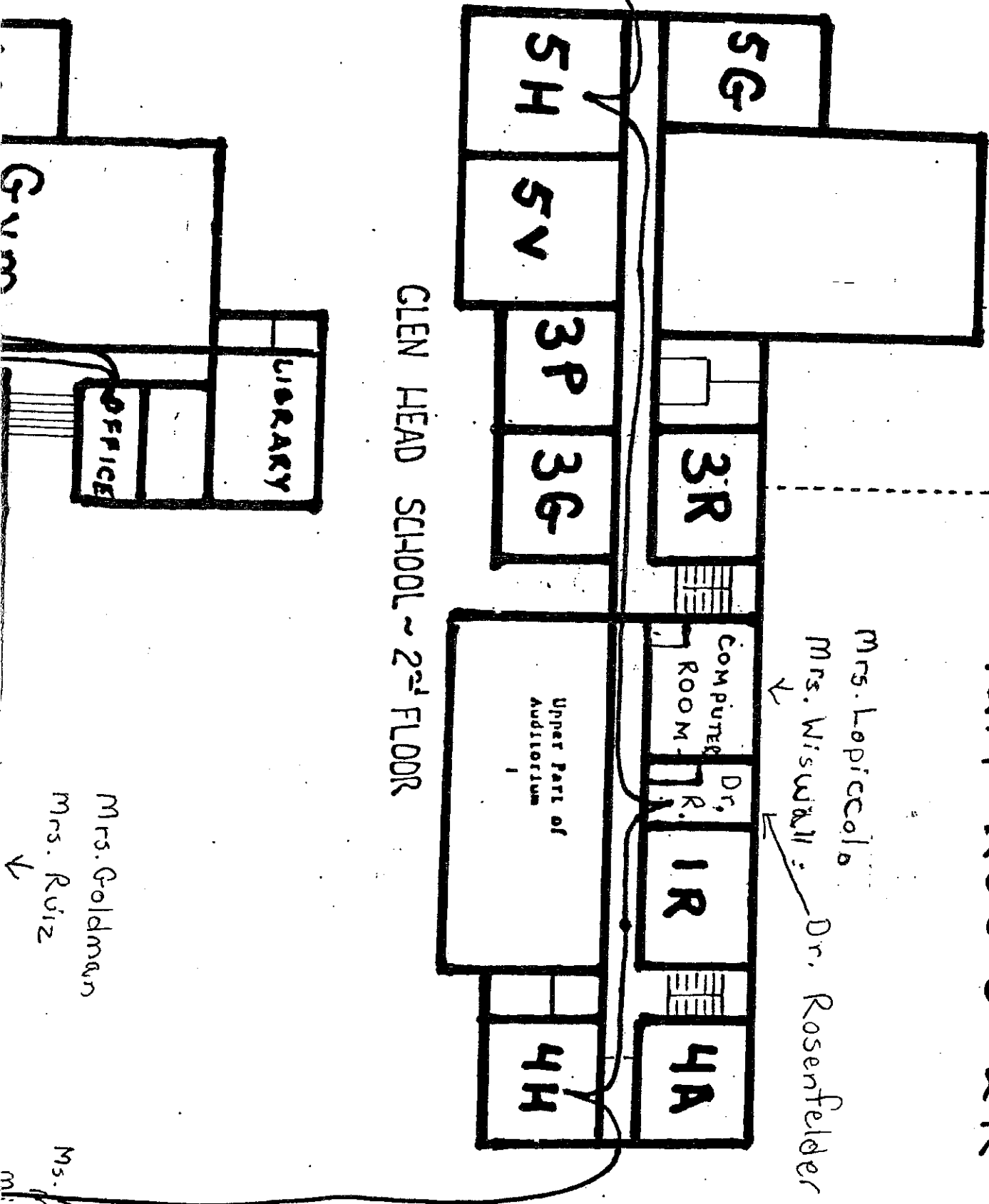
Mail Route 2R

Mrs. Lopiccio

Mrs. Wiswall

Dr. Rosenfelder

GLEN HEAD SCHOOL - 2nd FLOOR



Gym

LIBRARY

OFFICE

COMPUTER ROOM

Dr. R.

Upper Part of Auditorium

Mrs. Goldman

Mrs. Ruiz

Mrs. Andreucci

Mr. Kempton

Mrs. Kalish

Appendix F-Money Changer

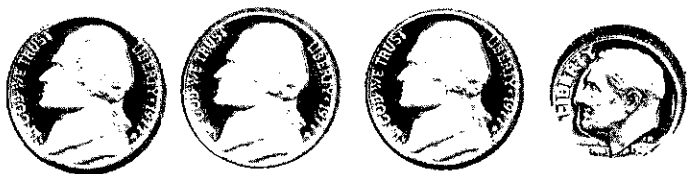
If the customer gives you 25¢ →



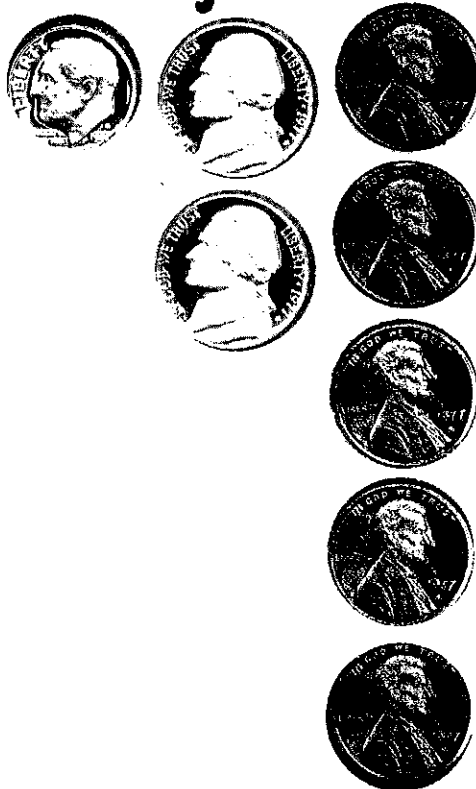
or



or



Make change from this:



If the customer gives you 20¢ →



or



Make change from this:



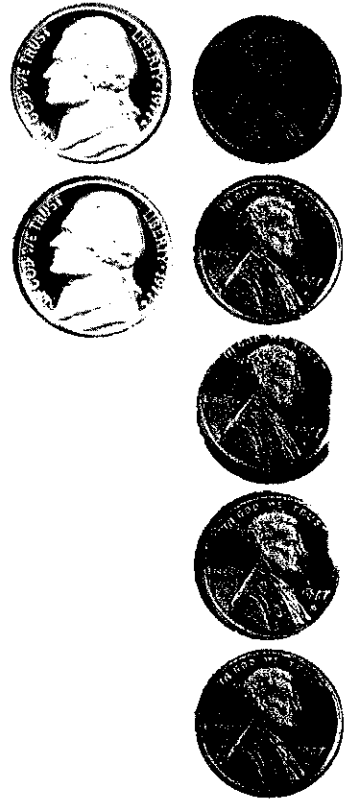
If the customer gives you 15¢ →



or



Make change from this:



If the customer gives you 10¢ →



or



Make change from this:



Appendix G-Responsibilities of Postal Workers

(G)

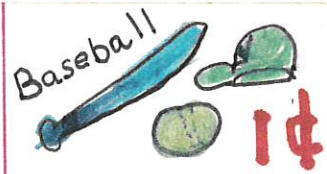
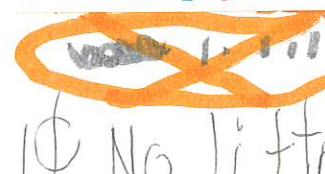
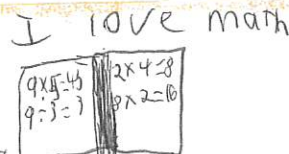
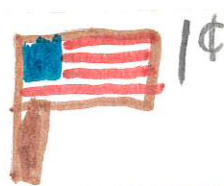
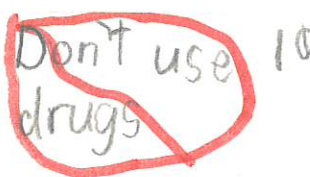
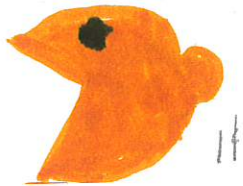
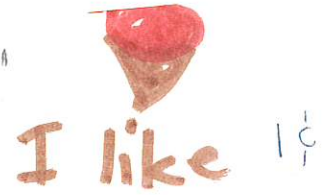
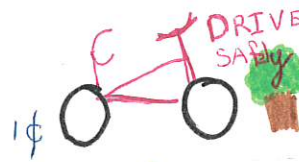
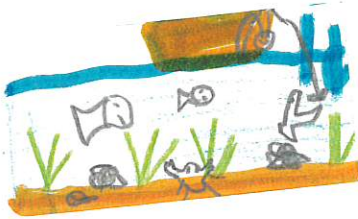
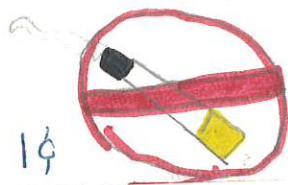
RESPONSIBILITIES OF POSTAL WORKERS

1. Provide reliable and efficient service.
2. Obey the instructions of your manager.
3. Report for work on time.
4. Work quietly and be polite.
5. Do not come to the post office earlier than you are scheduled, or stay around the post office when your shift is over.
6. Do not waste time before putting mail in the proper place.
7. When delivering mail do not stop to talk too much.
8. When you finish delivering the mail come back to the post office right away.
9. Protect all mail, money, and equipment.
10. Return all mail, money, and equipment to the post office at the end of the day.
11. Do not put mail in your pockets, clothing, desk, lunch box, or any other personal place.
12. Come to work looking clean and neat.
13. Don't argue with the customers.
14. Behave yourself in a way that will make people proud of both you and the postal service.

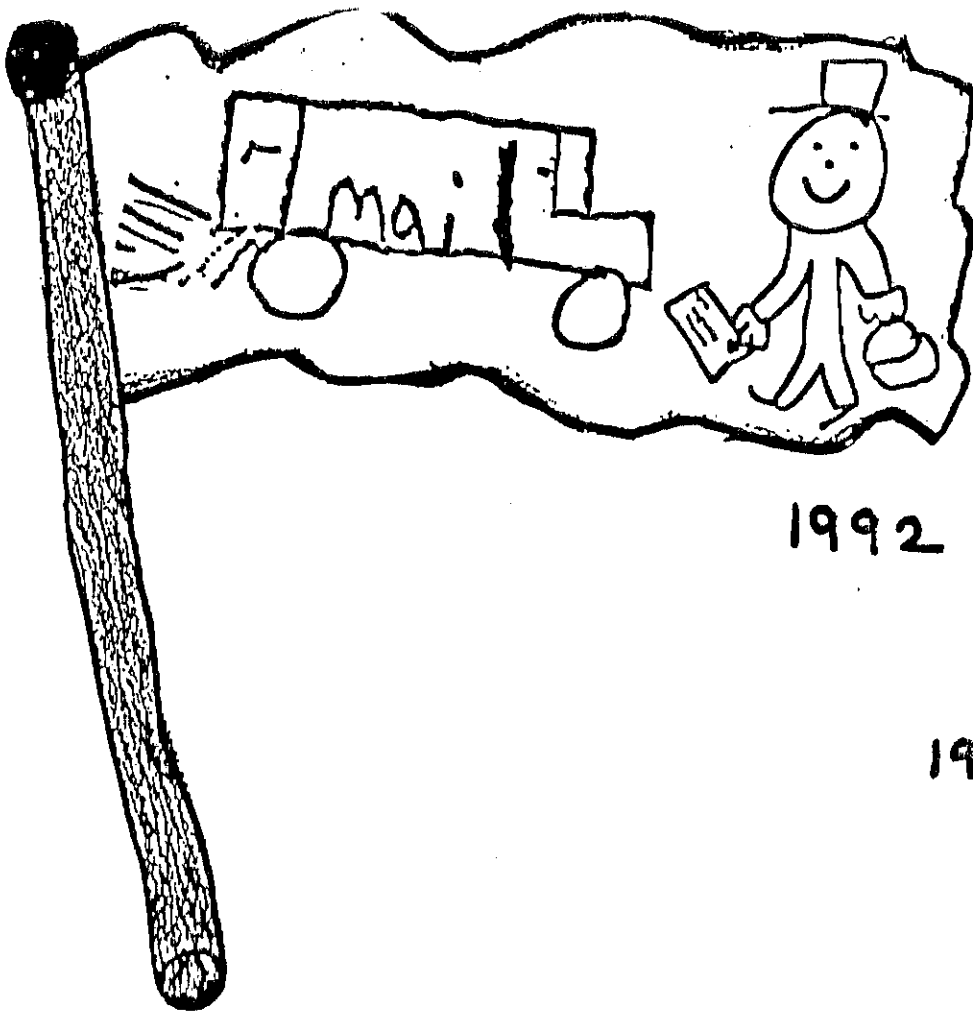
Ribner
May 1992
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Appendix H-Stamps

Love

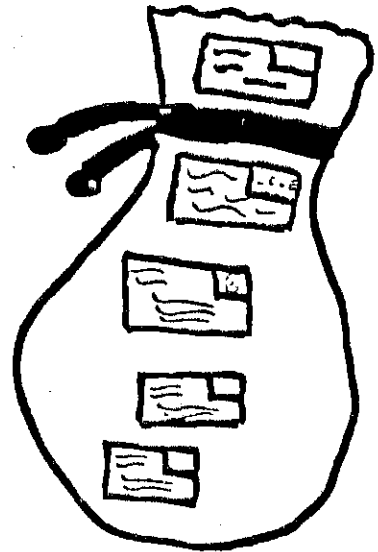


Appendix I-Emblems

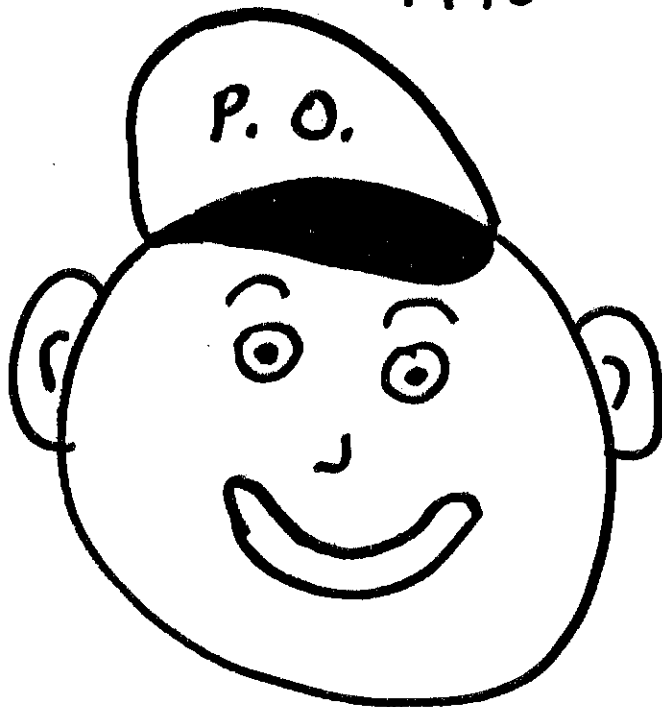


1992

1991



1990



Ribner
May 1992
93

Appendix J-Letters

Dear Ms. Ribner

The post Office was successful again it ran well and you had great Post carriers, I hope you do the post office next year,

Sincerely,

Tim, Edwin, Jonathan,

Erica, Matt, Katie, Katie C, Sgt, Diego

Erica Lazarow

Class 3-G
Glen Head
School

Dear Mrs. Ribner's
class,

I hope you raise
alot of money, like
we did last year.
I hope youre having
fun! Youre succeeding!

From,

Erica

P.S. Please write back
Lazarow 3-G

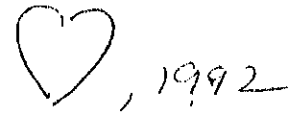
North Shore

Glen Head School

7 School Street • Glen Head, New York 11545 • (516) 671-5500

Michael V. McGill
Superintendent of Schools

Fredda Klopfer
Principal



Dear Carol,

The post office is a gift to the school. As I sit here enjoying the wonderful notes and valentines I received, I reflect on the fact that if it weren't for you it wouldn't exist. Thank you for this wonderful contribution (among others) to our school.

Sincerely,
Fredda



Wed. 2/13/91



Dear Ms. Ribner,

You all did such a fine job
with the wonderful Glen Head Elem.
Post Office!

Thanks!

Mrs. Kathleen Salerno

P.S. Andrea has been so enthusiastic
about this!

Ribner
May 1992
98

Appendix K-Publicity

NORTH SHORE SCHOOLS BITS 'N' PIECES

by Amy Tabor

Families at Glenwood Landing will be spending the evening together next month ice skating at Iceland, formerly Laces. This is their family night out sponsored by the SCA. Dorothy Holohan is chairing the event. Families will skate from 6:30-8:30 on March 28th. Parents can purchase tickets ahead of time for \$3 or at the door for \$4.

Student Post Office

Last week 2nd graders at the Glen Head School were busy delivering the mail in school. Every year a post office is set up in school manned by 2nd graders. Students in the building can mail letters and valentines to each other. This effort is part of the 2nd grade social studies curriculum which includes learning about ones community and the people who work in it. In Sea Cliff students are also running their own post office designing and selling stamps and sorting and delivering the mail that comes to them each day.

High School Pops Concert

Next Friday night February 28th at 8:00 the High School Band, Orchestra and Jazz Band will present a Pops Concert in the High School Gym. The musical groups will feature selections from Broadway shows and standard pop repertoire. Admission is \$2 at the door and like a ticket

bring the family because this is truly a wonderful evening of entertainment.

Basketball Shoot-Out Winners

The 2nd Annual Basketball Shoot-Out sponsored by the physical education dept. was held in the elementary schools and the Middle School. Congratulations to all the winners and to all those who came out and participated. In the 4th grade 1st place was Tim Rescigno, 2nd Matthew Popkin and 3rd Craig Gebhard. Among the girls 1st was Jamie Sorrentino, 2nd Megan Wick and 3rd Adreille Miller. In the 5th grade boys 1st was Mike Dellavecchia, 2nd James Jerabek and 3rd Gabe Slutsky. 1st among 5th grade girls was Melissa Munoz, 2nd Krysta Mierzejewski and 3rd Gigi Li.

In 6th grade 1st was Chris Ryba, 2nd Scott Durr, and 3rd Jeffrey Cohill. For the girls 1st was Rebecca Reilly, 2nd Meaghan Repko and 3rd Johanna Fairclough. For 7th grade 1st was Jason Napolitano, 2nd Julian Emelianoff and 3rd Joey Melillo. For the girls 1st was Allison Comito, 2nd Nicole Haugen and 3rd Laura Henning. 8th grade finishers were 1st Chris Farrell, 2nd Brandon Wiehn and 3rd David Swinburne. 1st place among the girls was Amanda Balzaretta, 2nd was Sonia Heide

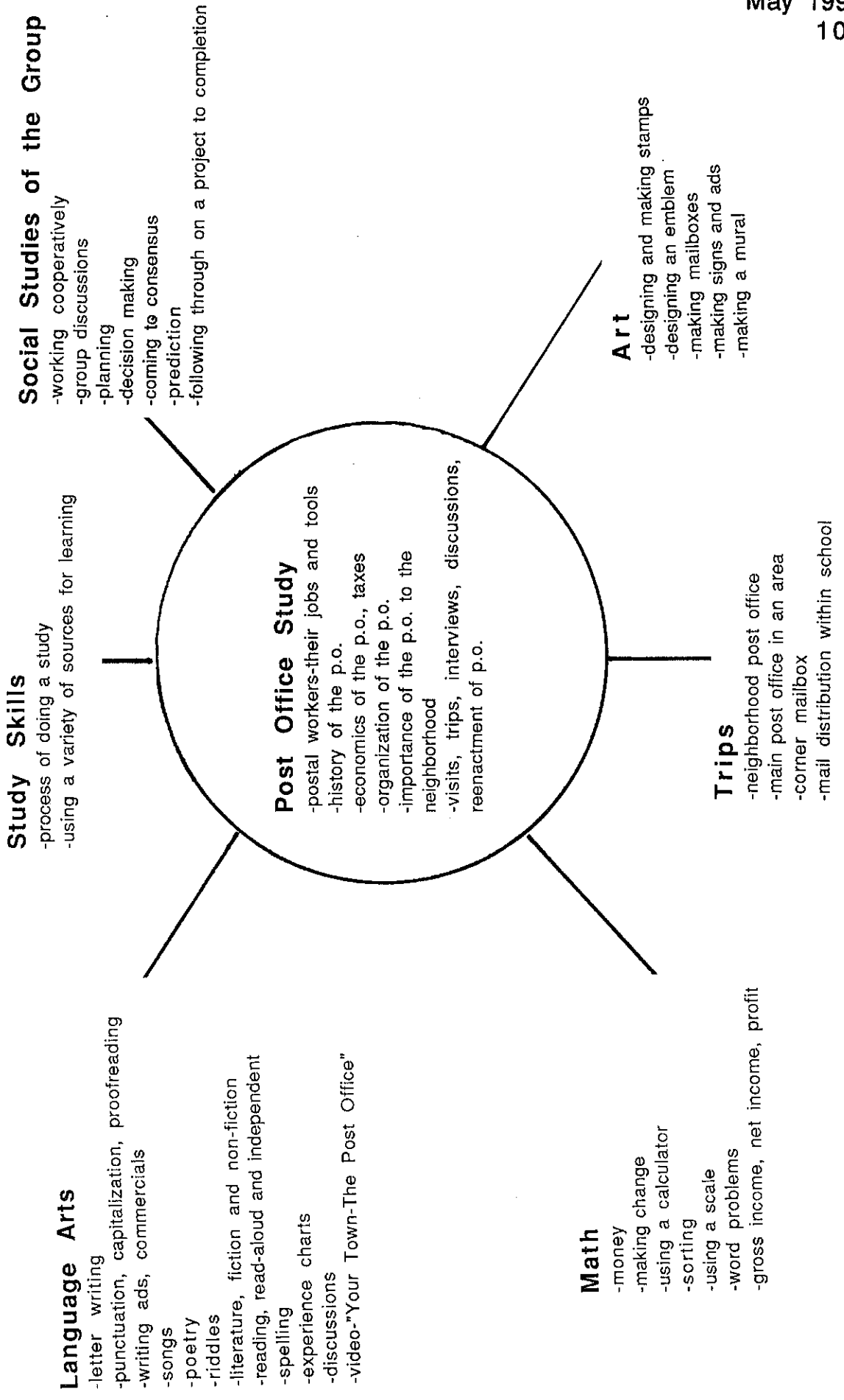
North Shore

"Neither Rain nor Snow . . ."

will keep Glen Head second graders from learning about the post office, part of their study of the community. In their very own post office, students design stamps, sell them, pick up and sort the mail, and deliver it to the classrooms on their route. Letter writing becomes the "in" thing! At work on the mail are, l. to r., Sondra Lowenstein, Holly Roberts, Lauren Berger, Elizabeth Savino, Jonathon Capobianco and Marissa Bowe.



Appendix L-Curriculum Web for The Post Office Study



Appendix M-Photographs from our Post Office

(M)

On our visit to the local post office S. finds mail for her family .



Making mail collection boxes



(M)

Making a mural



Designing an emblem



(M)

Writing a commercial for the public address system



Open for business



(M)

Emptying the mail collection boxes



Canceling the stamps



(M)

Sorting the mail



Delivering the out of town mail to another postal station



(M)

Off to deliver the mail



Depositing the mail in a classroom mailbox



BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN'S NON-FICTION BOOKS

Baker, Eugene. *I Want To Be A Postal Clerk*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1976.

An elementary school class finds out about the duties of and qualifications for being a postal clerk. Picture book.

Brandt, Betty. *Special Delivery*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Carolrhoda Books, 1988.

A history of the postal service describing ways mail has been sent over the years. Easy reader.

Crescent Books. *Color Treasury of Stamp Collecting*. New York: Crown Publishing Inc., 1972.

Large color photos of stamps make this an ideal resource for examining stamps.

De Pree, Mildred. *A Child's World of Stamps-Stories, Poems, Fun, and Facts From Many Lands*. New York: Parents Magazine Press, 1973. Postage stamps from around the world help introduce the geography, way of life, folklore, and poetry of many countries.

Gibbons, Gail. *From Path to Highway: The Story of the Boston Post Road*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1986.

A history of the Boston Post Road from Native American trail to the present day. Picture book.

Gibbons, Gail. *Post Office Book: Mail and How it Moves*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1982.

A step by step description of what happens to mail from the time it is deposited in the mailbox to its arrival at its destination. Also includes brief historical facts about mail services in the U.S.. Picture book.

Grossman, Samuel. *Stamp Collecting Explained*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 1988.

This book contains everything you ever wanted to know about stamp collecting. Includes several real stamps to get you started.

Holder, Stephen. *Collecting Stamps*. Morristown, N.J.: Silver Burdett Co., 1979.

Includes information on how to collect stamps, how a stamp is made, varieties of stamps and postal history. Contains good pictures. Chapter book.

Jacobsen, Karen. *Stamps: A New True Book*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1983.

A brief beginner's guide to stamp collecting. Includes large color photos and glossary. Large type and easy to read. Picture book.

Johnson, Jean. *Postal Workers A to Z*. New York: Walker, 1987.

Introduces postal activities from address through zip code and 24 letters in between. Photographic picture book.

Leedy, Loreen. *Messages in the Mailbox: How to Write a Letter*. New York: Holiday House, 1991.

Discusses the different kinds of letters, the parts of a letter, and who can be a potential correspondent, and provides examples. This book doesn't work so well as a read aloud because its format is similar to a comic book format, but it is a good book for the children to read themselves.

Lewis, Brenda Ralph. *Stamps! A Young Collector's Guide*. New York: Dutton, 1991.

Introduces readers to the history and great variety of postage stamps and examines some of the techniques used in identifying and collecting them. Includes large color photographs and glossary. Chapter book.

Petersen, Johanna. *Careers With the Postal Service*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lerner Publications Company, 1975.

Introduces young readers to the many career opportunities with the United States Postal Service including fleet manager, mail sorter, window clerk, customer service representative, data processing clerk, and mail carrier.

Roth, Harold. *First Class! The Postal System in Action*. New York: Pantheon, 1983.

Describes the largest postal system in the world, consisting of more than 70,000 mail-handling centers which collectively process some 360 million pieces of mail every day. Photographic picture book.

Shay, Arthur. *What Happens When You Mail a Letter?* Chicago: Reilly and Lee Co., 1967.

This book follows a letter from mailing it in a mailbox in Chicago to delivery by mailboat in Lake Geneva the next day. Photographic picture book.

Slobodkin, Louis. *Read About the Postman*. New York: Franklin Watts Inc., 1966.

A history of letter writing and mail delivery beginning 4,400 years ago to modern day. Except for the use of the sexist term postman, this book is an interesting and useful classroom resource. Chapter book.

Stein, Conrad. *The Story of the Pony Express*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1981.

A history of the Pony Express, which lasted only a year and a half, due to the invention of the telegraph. Approximate reading level: 3rd grade.

West, Richard. *The Whole World Stamp Catalog*. New York: Crescent Books, 1981.

Color photographs on almost every page make this book an excellent resource for examination of stamps.

Ziegler, Sandra. *A Visit to the Post Office*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1989.

A class visits the post office and finds out about the work that is done there. Photographic picture book.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN'S FICTION BOOKS

Ahlberg, Janet and Ahlberg, Allan. *The Jolly Postman*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1986.

The Jolly Postman delivers letters to famous story book characters like Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Contains actual letters in envelopes that you can take out and read. Picture book.

Brisson, Pat. *Kate Heads West*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1990.

In a series of letters to her friends and relatives Kate describes her trip through Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. Picture book. This is a good choice for an advanced reading group.

Brisson, Pat. *Your Best Friend Kate*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1989.

Kate's letters to her best friend back home chart her family's trip through the South, Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Picture book. This is a good choice for an advanced reading group.

Brown, Marc. *Arthur Goes to Camp*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1982.

Arthur is sent off to Camp Meadowcroak and is very unhappy. The illustrations include letters to Mom and Dad. Easy to read picture book.

Casely, Judith. *Dear Annie*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991.

This book presents a series of letters and postcards that Annie and her grandfather send to each other from the time she is born. Picture book.

Craven, Carolyn. *What the Mailman Brought*. New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1987.

While William is sick and unable to go to school, a mysterious mailman brings him unusual packages every day. Picture book.

Dupasquier, Philippe. *Dear Daddy*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1985.

The top portion of each double page spread shows Sophie's father on a long sea voyage, while the bottom portion shows her activities at home as she is describing them in a letter. Picture book.

Haley, Gail E. *The Post Office Cat*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.

Clarence the cat chases mice away from mail in Victorian London which earned him the first job of post office cat, a tradition that remains in effect today. Picture book.

Hedderwick, Mairi. *Katie Morag Delivers the Mail*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1986.

On the Scottish Isle of Struay Katie delivers the mail for her mom and mixes up the packages. Picture book.

Hoban, Lillian. *Arthur's Pen Pal*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.

Arthur decides he does not want to trade families with his penpal after all, despite the irritations of baby-sitting for a younger sister. An I Can Read Book.

James, Simon. *Dear Mr. Blueberry*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Group, 1991.

Emily writes a series of letters to her teacher about a whale that is living in her pond. Humorous picture book.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *A Letter to Amy*. New York: Trophy, 1984.

Peter writes a letter to his friend Amy inviting her to his birthday party, but when he knocks her down accidentally he worries that she won't come. Picture book.

Kightly, Rosalinda. *The Postman*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987.

As the postman moves on his rounds through the busy town he sees many aspects of its life from teachers at the local school to children in the swimming pool. Except for the use of the sexist term, postman, this book, written in rhyme, is good for emergent readers. Picture book.

Lockwood, Primrose. *Cissy Lavender*. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1989.

When Cissy Lavender agrees to take care of William Holly's house, cat, and dog while he is away, she expects a peaceful vacation. But her inventive housekeeping creates some unusual happenings. Cissy writes letters to William Holly detailing her housekeeping misadventures. Delightfully illustrated picture book.

Marshak, Samuel. *Hail to Mail*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1990.
A certified letter follows its intended recipient all over the world as the postal service attempts to catch up to him. Translated from the Russian poem first published in the Soviet Union in 1927. Picture book.

Maury, Inez. *My Mother the Mail Carrier-Mi Mama La Cartera*. New York: Feminist Press, 1976.

A five-year old describes the loving and close relationship she has with her mother, a mail carrier, and also relates some aspects of her mother's job. Written in Spanish and English. Picture book.

Miller, Edward. *Frederick Ferdinand Fox*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1987.

A fox relates the wartime events in which he conducted himself heroically and became postmaster general for the kingdom of Coralville. Picture book.

Moore, Inga. *Little Lost Dog*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Group, 1991.

Liz and her brother, Tom, move to the country and are too shy to make friends until their dog is lost and they turn to their new neighbors for help. Liz writes letters to her best friend, Jill through all her experiences. Picture book.

Parker, Nancy Winslow. *Love From Aunt Betty*. New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1983.

In this book, written in the form of a letter, Aunt Betty sends her nephew a strange recipe for chocolate fudge cake. Humorous picture book.

Rylant, Cynthia. *Mr. Griggs' Work*. New York: Orchard Books, 1989.
Mr. Griggs loves his work at the post office so much that he thinks of it all the time and everything reminds him of it. Picture book.

Shulevitz, Uri. *Toddlecreek Post Office*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.

Toddlecreek post office is the center of town until the postal inspector comes to visit and shuts it down because not enough official post office business is happening. Picture book.

Suhl, Yuri. *Simon Boom Gets a Letter*. New York, Four Winds Press, 1976.

When Simon Boom attempts to use his new letter opener, he discovers that he didn't know its true function. Picture book.

Va, Leong. *A Letter to the King*. U.S.A.: HarperCollins, 1991.

In ancient China, a young girl saves her imprisoned father by writing a letter to the king that persuades him to release her father. Picture book.

Williams, Vera B. and Williams, Jennifer. *Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea*. New York: Scholastic, 1988.

Presents a series of postcards and snapshots that Stringbean Coe and his brother Fred sent home to their mother, their father, and their grandfather from their long summer trip in Fred's truck. This is a good choice for an advanced reading group.

Zimelman, Nathan. *Please Excuse Jasper*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1987.

Jasper has so many excuses for not going to school, each one more fantastic than the next. This book is filled with comical letters to the teacher. Humorous picture book.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TEACHER RESOURCES

Harelson, Randy. *SWAK: The Complete Book of Mail Fun For Kids*. New York: Workman Publishing, 1981.
Suggests slogans, codes, craft projects, games and other activities that can enhance letter writing.

McAfee, Cheryl Weant. *Know Your Government: The U.S. Postal Service*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.
This is a good teacher resource but too difficult for most second graders to read.

Mischel, Florence D. *How to Write a Letter*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1988.
Discusses the importance of letter writing as a means of prompt and in-depth communication. Includes advice on writing business and friendly letters and information on postage, punctuation, and addresses. Good classroom resource for advanced readers.

National Geographic Society. *Your Town-The Post Office*. Washington, D.C., 1991.
This 15 minute video follows the early evolution of the postal service with historical film as well as accurate reenactments-from stagecoach and Pony Express to mail-carrying trains, ships and planes. It also tracks a birthday card as it travels through today's postal system with all the modern technology.

Society For Visual Education Inc. "Picture-Story Study Print/Postal Helpers". Chicago, Illinois, 1965.
A series of poster size photos showing the sequence of events from the time a letter is mailed to the time it is delivered.

Tchudi, Susan and Tchudi, Stephen. *The Young Writer's Handbook*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984.
Suggests helpful procedures and approaches for the beginning writer. Good classroom resource.

The U.S. Postal Service Long Island Division. *Activity Book*. Hicksville, N.Y.: USPS Long Island Division Communications Department, 1990.

This booklet is free from the post office and includes word games, puzzles, mazes and other activities. Suitable for primary grades.

The U.S. Postal Service Long Island Division. *Addressing Your Mail for a Fast Trip*. Hicksville, N.Y.: USPS Long Island Division Communications Department, 1990.

This booklet is free from the post office and includes interesting and practical information about addressing letters and how zip codes help the post office deliver mail quickly. Also included are mazes, puzzles and other activities. Suitable for advanced readers and middle grades.

The U.S. Postal Service in cooperation with the National Council of Teachers of English. *P.S. Write Soon!* Urbana, Illinois, 1982.

This book was designed for grades 4 through 8, but is a good teacher resource.

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