



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on August 17, 2011

Where's My Mail?

My problem started in June when I went to my local post office and filled out a mail forwarding card, as I do every year in June, stating that our mail should be re-routed temporarily to our house in Sea Isle, New Jersey, for five weeks.

We probably get an average of 10 pieces of mail a day, not counting the junk mail, so in five weeks that's about 300 pieces of mail.

It worked every year, except this year. Each week, we'd get no mail for four or five days and then one piece would arrive.

I checked Sea Isle's post office and they had no idea of why so little mail was arriving.

I figured maybe our mail was wrongly being held in Pittsburgh and we'd get a nice big pile of mail on the porch after we got home.

Instead, there was nothing in Pittsburgh.

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So what'd they do with our mail? Steal it? Burn it? Forward it to the FBI? Or was it sitting in a box somewhere in the back of the post office, waiting to be discovered some day like that love letter that was delivered in July this year after being lost in the Pittsburgh mail system for 53 years?

"WHY CAN'T LANSBERRY GET MAIL?" said Bob Lansberry's protest sign. I said the same thing, except inserting my own name, to the friendly clerk working behind the counter at my local post office.

"I don't know," she said. "Did you have another forwarding card in the system in the past 18 months?"

"Yes, every year at the beginning of June," I replied. "I fill out the card here."

"That's probably it," she said. "The system hasn't been working well if you had another forwarding request in the system in the past 18 months."

The system hasn't been working? And no one fixes it? And no one told us?

"So where's our mail now?," I asked.

"I don't know," she said.

And if this is happening throughout the system, where is everyone else's mail? If 20 million of us went on extended vacations and filled out cards asking for our mail to be forwarded again this year, at 300 pieces of mail per customer, let's say, that's six billion pieces of missing mail!

Six billion missing checks, missing answers to job applications, missing college acceptance letters, missing contracts, missing purchase orders, missing love letters, and no one fixes it, no one knows where the mail is, no one cares?

Several days after I left the post office I found out what happened to our mail.





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Our insurance agent called and said she got back a letter she mailed with our new insurance contract. The letter was marked "Forwarding expired," she said, like we'd skipped town and gone incognito.

Two days later, a magazine editor called with the same message. "Your check is here," he said. "Our mail came back with a sticker saying you'd moved with expired forwarding."

So maybe there are another 298 people out there who think I've moved with no operable forwarding address, and I, of course, have no way of knowing who received that erroneous information from the post office, or how many more checks I'm missing.

And we're supposed to turn over our healthcare system to these people, a system that's infinitely more complicated than forwarding a letter?

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