

# Smiling Mailman Lights Up the Hallways

By Teresa Shultz

He is a familiar sight to anyone at Penn State Harrisburg. He is the man with the mail cart and the smile.

Jack Benfer, 67, said he loves his job as Penn State Harrisburg's mailman.

"It's a great place to work," he said. "I have fun!"

Benfer has been working as the well-known mail deliverer for five years. And he certainly has practical experience: he retired after 31-years of service as a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service.

After retirement, he volunteered at the Dauphin County Agency on Aging as a tour guide showing senior citizen's groups Harrisburg's points of interest.

Robert Hamill, manager of Personnel and Business Services, contacted the agency in search of a replacement for the vacancy, left by Benfer's predecessor.

Benfer took the job and said he "will remain for as long as I am physically capable."

Wayne Mills, who is in charge of the mail service and supplies and to whom Benfer reports, said Benfer was a great addition to the crew.

"He always tries to make the students' day. He is always there and helpful and willing to put in that extra hour," said Mills.

Benfer's mail cart is proof of that.

He spent one Christmas break a few years ago fixing up what began as an old oak-finished cart.

He said he used the extra time he had after performing his duties to work on the cart.

He said he wanted to make sure he worked his full time.

"That cart is a piece of me," Benfer said.

Indeed, it seems to personify his attitude -- bright, cheery and lively.

It is covered in lights of various sizes -- picked by Benfer especially for the cart.

"I started with three [lights], but now I have seven," Benfer said proudly.

The lights include two headlights which are actually two battery-operated closet lights, a head strobe, a rear strobe, and two "blinkers."

"I saw them out somewhere and I just knew they belonged," he said of the small blinking lights.

He also has a lighted aluminum Penn State license plate which he said took him two weeks to figure how to rig to a 9-volt battery.

The newest addition is his lighted sunvisor which he said his son got at a night golf tournament.

He told his son he needed it as soon as he saw it.

"It is an accessory to the cart and I only wear it when I'm pushing the cart," Benfer said with a smile.

Benfer's caring and zest for life extend to all aspects of his life.

Benfer, who was in the Army during World War II and the Korean War, believes life is too short and should be enjoyed.

He said he changed his philosophy about 15 years ago when both parents died within six months of each other.

"There's not enough time in a day to do everything," the enthusiastic Benfer said.

In addition to his part-time job as Penn State Harrisburg's mailman, he enjoys many activities including

photography, woodworking, golf, and competitive rifle shooting.

He also likes reading Louis L'Amour westerns and working in his yard.

Benfer said he enjoys taking day trips and travelling with his wife Ruth, with whom he has five children and 14 grandchildren.

A recent excursion included a Caribbean cruise in May.

This coming May they plan to visit Orlando, Florida and Disneyland.

Benfer also has an extended family: three dogs including a yellow labrador, a golden retriever, and a mixed shetter.

"I just love dogs," said Benfer.

This love got him into trouble when he worked as a letter carrier in lower Paxtang.

He liked to feed the dogs on his route; he said he spent about \$20 a week on dog biscuits.

Each day he would go through four boxes of biscuits--one box of Milkbones for the larger dogs and three boxes of small biscuits for the smaller dogs, he explained.

Tom Glazewski



Penn State Harrisburg always receives the mail complete with a smile when Jack Benfer is on the job.

"I would be on one side of the street and the dogs on the other side would start barking," Benfer said.

He said he would be sure to slip a biscuit through the mail slot for any dogs inside and he would walk around to the back for the dogs tied in a backyard to deliver their "mail."

His activity, which he considered a goodwill gesture to the people on his route, was not so appreciated by the Postal Service.

He even had the use of a mail jeep suspended to deter him from carrying the boxes of bones.

The Postal Service thought Benfer's loving act could be dangerous for an empty-handed substitute mail carrier.

"I was the only letter carrier in the area on a foot route," he laughed.

But it did not matter. He continued to feed his dog-friends by stashing boxes of biscuits along with his mailbag.

# Contributions Top Campaign for PSH Seeks Senior Pledges

By David A. Blymire

The Campaign for Penn State Harrisburg will seek pledges from the college's seniors in a bid to increase alumni awareness of college needs, according to Karen McHenry Glantz, director of Development and University Relations.

Starting in January, seniors at PSH will be asked to make pledges that can be paid off over a five-year period after graduation.

The student may donate money to target a need in a specific department or program, if the student wishes.

Glantz said that current students have benefitted from the generosity of many alumni and friends of the college.

By asking students to think about pledging, they will be given the opportunity to become philanthropists, passing that same generosity on to the next group of students.

Student pledges will be added to the pool of contributions for the Campaign for Penn State, which includes donations from many area corporations, businesses, PSH alumni, and friends of the college.

Glantz pointed out that Penn State has been raising public funds since 1984, when the university Board of Trustees endorsed the Campaign for Penn State.

The original state-wide goal of \$200 million was raised to \$300 million last May.

Glantz said that University President Bryce Jordan is confident that the goal will be reached by June 30, 1990.

The university has raised over \$215 million toward that goal.

The state covers only 22 percent of the University's operating budget.

The remaining 78 percent comes from tuition, fees, and contributions.

By David A. Blymire

The campaign for Penn State Harrisburg has netted 87 percent of its \$2 million goal so far, according to Karen McHenry Glantz, director of Development and University Relations at Penn State Harrisburg.

The campaign, begun in 1984, has raised \$1.7 million, which includes both pledges and actual raised monies, Glantz said.

The \$2 million is geared to meet specific needs that have been listed in the Penn State Harrisburg needs statement that prospective donors receive when contacted by the college.

All the monies raised by Penn State Harrisburg stay at the college.

The statement lists the need for professorships, MET lab renovations, student aid, funding for the provost's lecture series, student and faculty research programs, academic program enhancements which include the purchase of new equipment, a communications lab, and the development and maintenance of an American studies archive.

Penn State Harrisburg has also received restricted monies and gifts-in-kind of materials that didn't specifically target anything in the needs statement, pushing the total contributions received to \$2.4 million.

Approximately 50 area companies are currently reviewing campaign proposals that total over \$600,000, Glantz said, and they probably will be making decisions within the next several months.

The campaign's deadline is June 30, 1990.

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