

# Letters to the Editor

I believe the Gustavus community must be knowledgeable about the harms of unwanted bulk [postal] mail. While it is a seldom-discussed problem, unwanted bulk mail costs Minnesotans time and money, and it hurts our environment. The average U.S. adult receives 40 pounds of bulk mail per year. This equates to the annual delivery of more than four million tons of bulk mail in the U.S. The average consumer spends seventy hours sorting this mail each year. We must consider the environment, as well. More than 28 billion gallons of water are used each year to produce these mailers. The inks used on bulk mailers often contain high concentrations of metal, which makes these pieces especially difficult to recycle.

While most announcements that are sent to a large audience here at Gustavus are communicated via e-mail (which I must commend the community for), many commercial solicitations are still sent via postal mail. When you travel home for the holidays, take a few minutes to inform your family and friends of the harms associated with un-

wanted bulk mail. As you look at the mail that you receive, consider whether or not you want the bulk pieces you find in your box. If you do not want to receive certain types of mail, don't just dump it; tell the sender! I have created a form that generates letters you can send to bulk mailers who you don't want to receive communications from. It is available at <http://stopbulk-mail.com/>. This website also provides additional information on the problems associated with bulk mail and more specifics on how to get off of bulk mailing lists. Best wishes keeping your mailbox clean.

Tom Lany '12