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July 3, 2014

The American Legion  
700 N. Pennsylvania St.  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Dear American Legion:

When I was growing up, I used to watch Saturday morning cartoons and one of my favorites was the Super Friends. That was the cartoon that had all of the superheroes (Batman & Robin, Superman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, etc.) working together from the Hall of Justice to fight against the bad guys from the Legion of Doom.

I was still pretty young at that point and I tended to confuse the Legion of Doom with the American Legion when I heard adults talking about events being held at or sponsored by the American Legion. I always wondered why our family would support the evil bad guys rather than the Super Friends and the Hall of Justice.

I don't know how old I was when I finally figured out that these were two separate and distinct Legions and that the American Legion was a noble and worthwhile organization, dedicated to truth, justice, and the American way. It made me proud to know that my family was supporting the same values as the Super Friends all along!

I know that the U.S. Flag is very symbolic of those values and that we celebrate those values every summer around this time of year -- along with a contest to see who can eat the most hot dogs in ten minutes. I can't believe that a Japanese guy out ate America's finest for so many years in a row! But it is nice to have that championship back into American hands as of late. Joey Chestnut is a true American Hero - Believe it or Not!

I have a question about the U.S. Flag that I was hoping you guys would be able to answer. You may or may not know about the "secret code" behind placing postage stamps upside down on a letter designating the love of the author for the addressee. I sometimes send short love letters to my wife in the mail (even though we live in the same house) and I place stamps upside down as extra emphasis of my love to her!

But I also know that it is a sign of serious disrespect to fly the U.S. Flag upside down and it should only be done as a designation of great distress and extreme danger to life or property: according to Title 36, U.S.C., Chapter 10.

A few years ago I bought a boatload of Forever Stamps from the post office, which should last me through the end of the decade. With the rate that the post office increases postage rates, I stand to save a lot of money with that purchase! My problem is that the Forever Stamps are of U.S. Flag design, so if I send a love letter to my wife, I have to place a symbol of the U.S. Flag upside down on the envelope in order to tell her that **I really love** her. Does this mean I am sending out love letters which could be interpreted as a sign of great and dire distress with extreme danger to life or property? Obviously, if I addressed a love letter to someone *other than* my wife, that **WOULD** be a case of extreme danger to my life and property, but I assure you I have not!

I am wondering which "unspoken coded message" trumps the other in this circumstance. Does the flag distress message only apply to a physical cloth flag being flown on a flagpole or mast and not to postage stamp representations of the flag? Would primary consideration be given to the fact that it is first and foremost a stamp denoting pre-payment for the post office to deliver a simple piece of mail with secondary consideration to the common practice of love letter emphasis? Do I need to go back out and buy new stamps at the current price (at a considerable loss with the inflated postage rates) in order to safely send my affectionate quips to my spouse?

Being flag experts, I was hoping you could shed some light on this distressing dilemma that I have. Thank you for your continued dedication to truth, justice, and the American way; and for all that you do for those who fight to protect that principled trilogy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rusty Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rusty Lucas

p.s. Does the American Legion have any free baseball caps that they could send to me? I was hoping to have a baseball cap suitable to wear next year for Memorial and Independence Day festivities to keep the sun off of my head. I will show respect for the U.S. flag and remove my cap at the appropriate times. Please send me a free American Legion baseball cap.