



Ben Franklin would be rolling in his grave

Benjamin Franklin (photo left), the first Postmaster General in 1775, joined dozens of demonstrators in front of Portland's Main Post Office July 26 to celebrate the 239th birthday of the U.S. Post Office — Postal Heritage Day — and denounce the piecemeal privatization of the postal service. “Benjamin Franklin would be rolling in his grave,” said Jamie Partridge, a retired letter carrier and an organizer for Communities and Postal Workers United, sponsor of the action. Many in the crowd, including substitute teacher Greg Burrill (photo above), also cut up their Staples Reward Cards. Staples contracted with the USPS to staff post offices installed within their stores, at the same time community post offices are being closed and hours reduced. Postal unions have launched a national boycott of Staples. The two largest teachers unions and the national AFL-CIO are supporting the boycott. Staples and the USPS recently announced that their “retail partnership expansion” was being phased out in favor of an “approved shipper” contract. Postal unions call the change a trick — the same privatization scheme under a different name. The protesters vowed to increase pressure on the office supply chain until they drop the postal contract.

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