



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

## Zipomania

Remember that promise I made back at the first of the year to write only good things about people? Well, here's another good news column. (For those who are wondering about the verbal interchange recently between me and the editor, you need to realize that old school chums do not fall in the category of "people" and thus are excepted.)

This time I have good news about the U.S. Postal Service.

Things are looking up. Last week Senior Assistant Postmaster General E. V. Dorsey announced the post office has installed a new efficiency program. The end result? Your ZIP code is being enlarged from five digits to nine.

I knew this would please you. Especially those of you who are already overjoyed about memorizing 10-digit phone numbers, nine-digit social security numbers, six-digit license tags and a 24-digit sweepstakes number from

Reader's Digest. However, the postal services says the new zip numbers will speed up delivery (no similarity to former statements, alive or dead), reduce the work load and keep the postal rates down.

This last item is really good news. In fact, it is so good the post office says it after every postal increase.

But all is not orderly yet. There are some problems. One is the money-saving program will not go into effect until 1984, and before then we are due at least two, maybe three postal increases. Besides that, it is going to cost hundreds of millions to get the new program in operation. That doesn't upset me, for my wife drives all the way to Orlando to buy a new dress — on sale. And I still remember old Homer Witherbee who used to raise the price of suits in his clothing store by 20 percent to cover the cost of his annual "Fifteen percent off sale."

Of course, the big problem is all those digits. Now everybody in the

nation — except those living on the same block — will have a different zip code.

Cheer up, though. The postal department says it will make available a complete directory of all the new numbers. The problem with that, though, is the book will be slightly smaller than the Encyclopedia Britannica and will cost \$19.95 for the cheap paper edition. Don't worry, though. By the time the old one tears up in six months the new revision will be ready. At the same price.

After all, it costs to save.

Most folks don't believe me when I get preachy in this column and say there's only one kind of Good News in today's world. But just hang around a while. Pretty soon things will be so bad that even "Repent!" will sound good.

Thank God we don't need a zip number to reach heaven. If that was the case, most of us would wind up in the dead letter office.