I'm like a kid again, waiting anxiously for the mailman to arrive so I can rip open the letters and see what's inside.

It reminds me of my high school days, waiting for letters from colleges to see if I'd been accepted or not. The University of Michigan finally said yes, after putting me on the waiting list, so that was a great day for the Ecker family.

It also reminds me of my senior year at college, when I wrote all those letters to the Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, New York Times, Yonkers Herald-Statesman and Ann Arbor News to see if they'd give me a job in their sports department. The answers were No, No, No, No and No, so that got a little discouraging.

Finally, one of my journalism professors at Michigan told me that a little newspaper in Fort Madison, Iowa, was looking for a sports editor. It wouldn't pay much at $148 per week and I'd have to cover the Lee County Board of Supervisors and occasional prison breaks -- in addition to a half-dozen high schools and the rodeo -- but I was 22 and anxious to get started.

It turned out to be the best move of my life, where I got started as a professional journalist and met my wife Jan.

Now, 40 years later, I wait for the mailman to arrive with letters from new friends in the Metro area who have kindly decided to join

our
"Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" campaign. I'm rarely disappointed.

The list keeps growing, at about 8 or 10 new "Friends" per week. It's certainly not an avalanche, but the idea has caught on with people who
appreciate our work and are happy to donate $25 to the cause.

Everyone who joins gets a "Friends" T-shirt and gets their name added to the list on our special "Friends of Metro Sports Report.com" page on the website.

If you'd like to join or read more about it, please CLICK HERE and you'll go straight to the page. It's an easy step-by-stop process from there.
Simply print the registration form, fill it out and mail it along.

There's been a flurry of new membership since we provided our last update on the campaign.

The Slezak family, Mark Wold and Scott Anderson have joined. The Schneekloth family climbed aboard - with Terry, Julie and Lucy.

So did Thomas Milke, a big fan of the Kirkwood Eagles. And so did more members of the Ask Family -- Jerry and Shelley Ask, along with Jerry K. Ask
Investment
Services.

Lucy Schneekloth was a member of those record-setting sprint relay teams at Cedar Rapids Jefferson the past few years. She's trying a new event at
Iowa State, according to her mother.

"She is a pole vaulter and loving it," Julie Schneekloth told us.

"Thank-you for all you do for high school athletics," Julie added.

We're just about done making new "Friends" in October. A new month begins Sunday and I can't wait to see what the mailman brings Monday
afternoon.

Thanks very much for being our friend.