

COLLECTOR

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Howard DeVore 4705 Weddel street
Dearborn Heights, Michigan

BAH & HUMBUG

As mentioned in the previous mlg I am now working for the US Post Office, it has proved to be an interesting & sometimes discouraging experience up to this time. We've just finished the annual Christmas rush with it's attendant horrors. I've been working about five or six weeks when this rush started.

Last Spring when I took the civil service examination Sybil went along just for the sport of it and also took the test, her score was high enough to put her on the tentative list and they called her in for a 30 day appointment. Now, she knows what I go through. Yesterday I had my first day off since Thanksgiving. We've been on a seven day schedule, working 12 hours per day with the exception of a few days like Xmas eve, etc.

I've always wondered why so much mail gets misssent at X-mastime and now I know throughly! Besides the 30 day appointees the p.o. also hired temporary help that worked a few hours per day for about two weeks.

In one case the ofreman put Sybil on an unfamiliar sorting case, now these "cases" are divided into cities and states. Sybil was standing in front of it fumbling the letters, trying to learn just where each state was located.

The girl next to her was real whiz, throwing letters into the various compartments, she was really setting a record! Finally she came over and told her, "You're too slow, if you don't speed up they'll get rid of you. Here, throw them like this, if you can't find the right state just put it anywhere. Someone else will straighten it out!"

The girl was partially right; The letters are taken from these compartments, tied in bundles and sent on to the city or state. After they reach that state they are re-sorted into local areas. Your letter to California is pulled out of the Boston stack and sent back across country unless the Boston clerk is also determined to make a good showing.

Sybil continued to go slowly and two hours later had learned the sorting case and was sending the letters to the proper destination.

A few days ago I ran into a "Special Delivery" letters mailed from one point in Dearborn to another point in Dearborn. This should take a matter of a few hours - from the postmark it had already been circulating a matter of four days.

I also spotted an Airmail letterx from NY to Seattle in the local Dearborn mail, how this got to Dearborn in anybody's guess.

We've experienced our first day in some weeks without our accustomed Xmas help. For the last four weeks they have been handling the mail leaving Dearborn while we handled only that mail for local delivery.

There's a considerable difference, the outgoing must meet train schedules and there's a push to have it ready for them, whereas the local stuff is slightly more leisurely. A half million pieces of advertising can always be pushed aside while we work the first class.

Then there's the din of the cancelling machine, an ever present annoyance on the outgoing side - on the in-coming we usually have a few radios going and some conversation.

Part of the time I've been using a transistor radio with earplug, I realize that not everyone wants to hear what I do but I've found a few pieces of interest late at night. A couple of weeks ago I was plugged in and the foreman passed by. "Listening to Keener?", he asked, knowing that I can't stand the local jump & scream music.

"Oh no," I said, "I've got a lecture on Shakespeare coming out of Boston" He looked at me with an amused grin, thinking I guess that I was playing one-up, so I pulled the plug out and held it near his ear. "Byghod, you are", he said and proceeded to tell me that his wife says that cat has a lot on the ball.

A few days ago I caught an interview with Mickey Spillane, he was asked if he felt some inner need to write and he said, "Oh no, but I needed the money. I'd been writing comic books and there was a slump so I started writing books. Really you're just reading a comic book in printed form." Then they asked him why he'd started writing again after several years. He replied, "Well, the government wanted their money for the back income taxes and I'd run out of cash, so I had to get some more."

While typing the last paragraph our local mailman, (as distinguished from the 100 I work among) arrived and I asked him about the new mail-carrier, a female. He still doesn't believe that Dearborn is really getting a woman carrier, the first in their history. I finally convinced him that I'd been working beside her for three months and that she was serious about the job.

I've been having considerable problems with the delivery "scheme", this is the sorting arrangement for local letters. We are required to learn each and every street in Dearborn and which carrier serves each street or section thereof. In my division there are about 450 streets or portions of streets & about 40 carriers. My street for instance is served by two carriers #130 & #512. Each one carries from four to ten streets.

The carrier will cover about 8 to 10 miles per day on foot haul probably 500 letters and up to 20 pounds of assorted trash. We have what is known as "Life Day", "Digest(Readers) Day", etc.

The combine is moving + + + + +

As a result of recent meetings a new convention committee has been formed. The '66 convention will, we hope, be put on by a three city combine.

Fans call for the convention to be held in Cleveland, headed by Ben Jason, financed and backed by the entire Detroit & Cincinnati ~~and~~ groups

Now this should be the largest group of experienced fans to put on a convention. Oh, larger clubs have managed a convention but where will you find an "in-group" containing more people. Detroit for ~~example~~ example had a club of some 30 or so people when we bid for and got our bid. When we approached them to do actual work they fell by the way-side and we wound up with six workers. At the moment we have nine people who know their way around, people with the knowledge to prove usefull rather a hindrance. Cincinnati can produce about this same number. Added to the Cleveland group we can put some 25 experienced warriors in the field.

We are earnestly soliciting your personal support. Not all policy has been fully determined but we're working on it, we expect to hold more meetings throughout the spring and by summer should have a full scale campaign rolling.

As mentioned earlier the DeVore household managed to make it past Xmas without any great financial difficulty. There was period, just past when Sam and I together were earning about 350 bucks per week.

Working for NU for the last few years Xmas was always a sudden ~~ix~~ letdown. Xmas eve I expected a 2 to 4 week lay-off, just at the time when bills pulled up badly. I usually entered February with a \$500 debt hanging over my head. Not ~~expecially~~ especially Xmas bills, but a mountain of other things - like car insurance, county taxes, etc.

I leased a vari-typer a few weeks ago. Wandering through the Salvation Army junk shop I spotted two of them. They seemed to be in good condition and about the time I was wondering what sort of deal I could make a gentleman in business suiti approached me.

"That's a fine machine", he advised me, "and a really good buy". visions of a vari-typer paraded through my mind. Can I knock him down to \$200 I wondered, "You can have either one of them for \$125" he said. I casually mentioned the very high cost of repairs when they do need them, but it was useless. This character had apparently been making phone calls. If the local shops get \$205 for a used machine he was going to do as well.

I guess he made it. Two weeks later both machines were gone!

When old Jim Broderick married the day before Thanksgiving, it seems to have a success since he's still living with the woman and its over a month now.

Sybil, the kids and I left here an hour before wedding and ran into a traffic jam immediately. I managed to make it to the church just minutes before the start of the ceremony, dropped Sybil at the door, took the kids another mile to my Mother's place and raced back.

As I explained it later, "I missed most of the travelogue, but got there in time for the comedy".

There was the usual reception immediately after the wedding and about midnight I walked over to Jim. I'd pulled an old key off my ring (to a garage where I used to live). I dropped this key in his hand, saying, "Here, whatever you do - don't lose it!", and walked away.

A little later Jim came over and said, "Uh, what's it for?", I gave him a dirty look and walked away.

Shortly before they left I went over and told him he wouldn't need the key after all. I figured I'd let him sweat enough.

My old buddy Dean McLaughlin has sold another book, this one to Larry Shaw of Lancer. It ought to be out early in '65. The title may yet be changed so I won't quote it. Larry has promised a decent cover - not like the atrocity Pyramid stuck him with last time.

Our new dog has worked just fine, as affectionate as they come. Usually she's sleeping in the living room when I get home, when my key turns in the lock she wakes up, runs to the door and as I come through the door she leans on me, then runs back to "her" chair and rolls over on her back to get her tummy scratched.

Perhaps I should take this space to wish everyone a "Merry Xmas" and a "Happy New Year". Somewhere about December 15th I started to make out a list of Xmas cards. I got the first 25 done and quit. I just never found time to finish them up. So, if you normally get one from me and didn't get it this year you haven't been cut off the list - it's just been postponed for a year.

I think that next, or rather this, year I'll send out my Xmas cards in September when I can spare the time.

It looks as tho I've saved my membership for another 3 months.

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Howard DeVore