

COLLECTOR published for the Spectator Amateur Press Society October 1965
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Another three months have almost rolled around and here we go again on that ageold merry-go-round known as Saps. Unless something goes wrong I'll finish out another year of minium activity. The pace has been preety strong for the last few years, I simply have no time for relaxation anymore.

This is something that's starting to bother me, this summer I went over that "40" line and I can't help recalling the goneby years when I could look forward to sitting down in the evenings and calling them my own. I could read a book, fool with the typesetting that I enjoy but simply haven't got time for now, take in a show, or call a few of the boys and invite them over.

It seems that I've been in the middle of a rat race since about '57-'58

In case you can't tell by the improves service, etc I'm still with the post office, and on the verge of making "regular" clerk. I worked some 9-10 months as a "temp", temporary clerk. Now, this is according to tradation, the lowest form of life. It's a creature that pumps mail, empties sacks, and does whatever it's told for as many hours as it can stand on it's feet.

A few weeks ago I made "substitute" clerk. This is an in-between type. I can't be booted out without cause, They can always make it mizzerable enough that I'll quit but I see no reason that they should do so. In any case when I became a "sub" employee I got transferred onto a day shift. They need a few employees at each location in this classification.

So, yesterday Sybil heard (at the main office) the rumor that they would be appointing 12 new "regular" (career) clerks. Now, a "regular" is the top classification among clerks. A regular normally works 40 hours per week, he gets four weeks vacation annually, he also gets paid holidays (and suffers a pay cut of 8¢ per hour) he gets 12 days a year sick leave, etc.

Today when I reported for work the senior clerk at the station told me that I'd be a regular soon, later the station superintendent mentioned the same thing -- and I haven't heard a word offically.

Financially it has been a pretty good year. I have worked not less than 60 and usually closer to 70 hour per week. Sybil has also owrked for the p.o. most of this year, with occasional lay offs and (unpaid) sick leaves. We've got a decent car for a change, new carpeting, a new dinette suite, and should make the final payments on the house in the next few weeks. We desperately need new furniture, etc but all things come in time I guess. We're having new sidewalks and driveway put in this week and getting ready to sell the house and get another larger one I guess.

The house just isn't large enough for us any longer. Sybil bought a new broom this summer and I got a couple more books. There just isn't enough space for the works. Matter of fact I've bought about 4,000 books and magazines in the last two months, a good deal of which is now stored on the east side of Detroit. Everytime I stack a few hundred in the living room Sybil raises such a fuss that I get them out. That woman just has no consideration!

We had a little comic convention in Detroit about six weeks ago, nothing much happened but I guess everybody had a good time. I think there's another one planned for next year but am not sure.

It's another ten days and I have made "regular" - I'm on a flat 40 hour week now, but it doesn't seem to help too much. You see, Sybil is still owrking and she's doing 56 hours per week. This leaves me with almost full charge of the kids and the house.

The post office has something they call a "scheme examination", this concerns the method used to sort the mail (and should be sufficient to fill a half page). The mail arrives at the post office in sacks, now somehow it has to get sorted out for the individual carriers. We take these huge stacks, trays, etc and break it down in a pre-sort arrangement. This involves knowing every street in the city of Dearborn & Dearborn Hgts. There are approximately 1500 divisions in this operation. For instance River Lane goes to carrier 103, Riverdale 24500 up goes to 104, whereas Riverdale 8000 to 24500 is put into a box designated Hgts (eventually it will go to another sorting case ((with some 600 other streets)) and be sent onto to carrier 256).

This is one of the simpler cases. Carlysyle street for instance has 13 different carriers, ~~xxxx~~ changing carriers at 1800 to 18200 *127, 18200 to 19300*129 and so on and so forth. In addition to this we are required to learn the names of box holders at the various stations, determine from vague information that some pieces of mail go to the local veterans hospital, etc. For instance I have engraved in my mind the fact that Dr. Trevis has an office on N. Telegraph and goes to carrier 218. It is seldom indeed that his address appears on a letter, just the bloody name!

Well, in any case; new clerks are given 90 days to learn this sorting scheme with 95% accuracy. It can be rough - it took me the full 90 days to make it. Many of the clerks get almost no practice on the thing and this makes a world of difference. Some of our clerks spent their ninety days and still only knew from 25 to 50% and then suddenly they added a lot of new carriers and changed the whole thing. Even yet I sometimes catch myself throwing mail to the carrier that used to have that street.

Sybil spent her 90 days (March to June) trying to learn it and working many long hours, she had reached a point where she knew somewhere over 75% of it when it was changed, at the same time management told her that when the next 90 days were up she would be laid off. This suited her just fine and she proceeded to forget the whole thing. She had visions of sitting home this winter, drawing a fat \$40 per week unemployment pay. The tenth of September rolled around and they laid her off - for three days, and then called her back!

She went back on an "indefinite" status, this lasted about a week and then she got a "substitute" appointment, and the examiner came up and said, "I'll test you tomorrow". She protested, "But, I've only been back two weeks". He said, "I'll see you tomorrow" and walked away. She still has 90 days to learn it but wanted to look fairly good so she's been studying day and night. Yesterday he tested her and she got a 54% rating.

In many ways I wish she hadn't gone back to work, but we'll be needing money early next year, Karol must have an operation on both feet, the bones are twisting and turning her feet in, someday this would cause considerable discomfort and might make her walking impossible, so it's off to the hospital she goes. She's been taking it well, I promised that since it had to be done anyway I'd have the doctor graft webs between her toes so she could swim better.

The sciencefiction stock continues to grow, I have bought between four and five thousand pieces in the last two months and have it stacked everywhere. I have no basement or garage and the attic was already filled. Karol currently has some 10 boxes of hardcovers under her bed and (at a guess) 1,800 paperbacks stacked around the walls of her room.

See, two pages. That's not too many! Howard