

THE STORY BEHIND THE NEWS

Composed by Miss Mary Rebecca Cregar (EBBA Treasurer), Mr. Edward M. Johnson (of Edward M. Johnson & Co., Commercial Printers, Belleville, N.J.), Mr. & Mrs. Christopher N. Rose (Mrs. Rose is EBBA's Circulation Manager), and Frederick S. Schaeffer (EBBA Editor). This is the story of the work involved in designing the outlay of the News, printing, collating, binding, mailing, etc. etc., facets which the average reader never becomes acquainted with. The story is in two parts, possibly three, and the first part covers the work done by the editor.



Editor at work on an issue of EBBA NEWS

Part I - The Editor's Job

When Chris Rose wrote me to ask how I'd feel about doing a photo story of EBBA News, behind the scenes, I was in agreement but faced with the problem: How to make something which is plain tedium, sound interesting to our readers?

From the letters I receive, some 25-40 a week (it varies), it is perfectly obvious that most members think that being editor is easy. Actually, I thought so too, when I volunteered my services. I had visions of "being editor" on a 3 day per week basis....how wrong I was! The editor's job is one which never stops; it has succeeded to usurp all my spare time left after discounting the 1-2 days per week spent in the field. However, despite all this, I've come to like it and as a result, I'm trying to put as much effort into EBBA News, as I possibly can.

Generally, when a paper, article, note, etc., comes into my mailbox, I read it over fairly hastily. If it does not stand this first general scrutiny, it will never go further. The next step, in some cases (short notes and informal articles do not), they find their way to one of the two other members of the review board (besides myself), Dr. Don Cooper or Don Heintzleman. The report which comes back is a guide for me; not a command. There have been many occasions in which I have not seen it that way...and published something over the recommendation not to. In most cases however, I try to stick by the judgement of the referee.

Let us assume, the deadline has just passed and I have most of my material lined up. Of course, there are always those who manage to be late and they foul up the works royally.... The next step is to estimate or count the amount of pages I am going to need. This is very important because the number of pages have to conform to the cost estimate for that issue, given to me by the Treasurer. On the composite on page 82 lower left corner you see part of a sheet which I use to plot outlay of the magazine. This plotting sheet also helps do the index when it's all finished.

Once it has been determined what goes where and how, the work begins which is just plain dull, tedious and highly tiring: the actual typing! Unlike popular assumptions, ye editor does all the typing because if we'd let a typing service do it, it would come to \$2.50 a page minimum- which we cannot afford. Besides, I could not possibly submit uncorrected manuscripts to a typing service, or text figures...or those done in pencil (or long-hand)...

Typing takes a lot of scheming to make it fit. Take page 82, for instance. The original should actually not exceed certain measurements. By working out special reduction percentages on the proportional scale pictured on the right lower picture, I am able to make it fit. The material on page 82 was reduced 28% to make it fit.(the width was the problem here, not the length which is usually the case).

Photos which have to be returned to the author present a special problem. The pictures on the previous page were taken in Black and White especially for this purpose, they were cut up and made into a composition, so there was no problem. When they have to be returned however, we cannot cut them up and we then have to make paper frames to fit around them and have the printer re-shoot the whole business. If there is anything which is bad, that is it--it is both time consuming and after a couple of pages like that....I'll leave my disposition to your imagination.

Since the off-set printing method calls for camera copies to be photographed we do have a certain amount of flexibility. If an error is made, it is not necessary to retype the whole page; a sticker with the correction on it, can be pasted over the error. If, after it's all done, I do not like something, I can stick a blank piece of paper over it, with an illustration on it, and the original typing cannot be seen anymore.

When the whole issue is done, it is delivered to the printer. I like to hand-carry it to Belleville because when I mail it, it causes several sleepless nights...suppose it were to get lost in the mail? I cannot make a carbon copy of it; if I did, the page impressions would be broader and when reduced, the print would be less legible.

This, however, is not the end of the story. Every day, mail comes in. People have questions, want reprints, would like to buy old issues, have suggestions, or comments....or just feel like writing... These letters have to be answered. Sometimes, a postcard or a quick-reply form will do the trick; usually, it is necessary to write a long epistle. I do not like to do things half-way. Books have to be requested for book reviews; photographs which come in, in slide form, have to be brought to processing services and often, photos have to be cropped.

Very often, particularly during the summer months, a lot of issues are returned as undeliverable. Often, no forwarding address is given. Between 60 and 100 such items are returned to us by the post office as Third Class Mail is not forwardable. People just do not seem to care to advise us where they are moving. 10¢ is paid on each item as postage due (since it is sent out bulk rate during the original mailing as Ruth Rose will tell you in the next part of this story); 10¢ more is needed to send them to the new address and 18¢ additional are needed to send copies of the change of address to Ruth Rose, Becky Cregar and Herb Volker, our membership chairman. It isn't just the money which is wasted to process these problem children, it is the effort expended to go thru these motions too. Add this to everything else, my job and my field work(which seems to have diminished greatly over the last couple of months) and what do you have left: about 1/2 hour a day to look at the News on T.V. I'm not kidding either. However...the bright points of the job ever-shadow the sad parts by far. I like working with you and I have found a great many new friends.

I only hope, I'll be able to keep doing it as long as my predecessor...and do as good a job as he did.