

Burst Of Inventiveness Buries Patent Office Under Technical Lag

WASHINGTON (UPI) — If U.S. Patent Commissioner David L. Ladd were the melodramatic type you could probably find him looking through his office window crying out plaintively:

"Technology, technology everywhere—but not a drop for me." The 36-year-old commissioner is presiding over a governmental activity whose problems must present one of the classic ironies of our time.

The nation is in the midst of an unprecedented burst of inventiveness and technological progress that is helping everyone—and slowly crushing the Patent Office to death under a mountainous workload.

Ladd, who is far from the waiting type, is making a spirited effort to reorganize his office. The outcome could determine whether the present system will survive.

His new approach includes trying to adapt some of the new technology to speeding up the processing of patents. But so far, this phase of the reorganization has had only limited success.

Ladd, a former Chicago patent lawyer, stresses that the job of saving the present system won't be easy.

"The situation is not desperate," he said in an interview. "But on the other hand, the Patent Office has been chronically behind for a long time. I think the time has come when we will have to make a decision."

Law May Be Revised
Ladd said that if the present reorganization does not improve the situation by the middle of next year, "there should be a comprehensive revision of the patent law."

The root of the problem is the growing increase in patent applications, which reached 80,229 in 1962. This was 16,000 more than the office received 10 years ago.

The crush is so great that it now takes about 3½ years from the time the application is submitted until final action is taken. The backlog at present is running about 197,000.

This "information explosion"—as Ladd terms it—is one of the products of an age of frantic technological activity, spurred by defense requirements and an unquenchable thirst for a higher standard of living.

Inventive fashions are changing too. Once the inventor was symbolized by the chap who pattered around in the garage or the basement.

That no longer is true. Technology now is mass produced in sleek new plants where large teams of white-coated scientists work at the job every day of the week.

In addition to this big increase in volume of new applications, the Patent Office is harassed by these other problems:

—The growing stack of patents that must be checked when a new application comes in is increasing.

For instance, some of the previous groupings contained such dissimilar subjects as: threshing, knotters, harvesters, animal husbandry, bee culture and acoustics.

Now the stacks of patents are filed under such headings as: "General Chemistry," "Petroleum Chemistry," and "Coating and Laminating."

The commissioner also is attacking the personnel problem by trying to improve working conditions. Examiners' salaries have been raised. Promotions now are governed by competency instead of seniority.

Ladd's reorganization includes reclassification of the 10 million patents on file into fewer categories to speed up the examining process. The patents also are being filed with more logical emphasis on their subject matter.

Trained Men Needed
—This time-consuming activity is aggravated by a lack of trained personnel. Private industry is continually hiring away patent examiners.

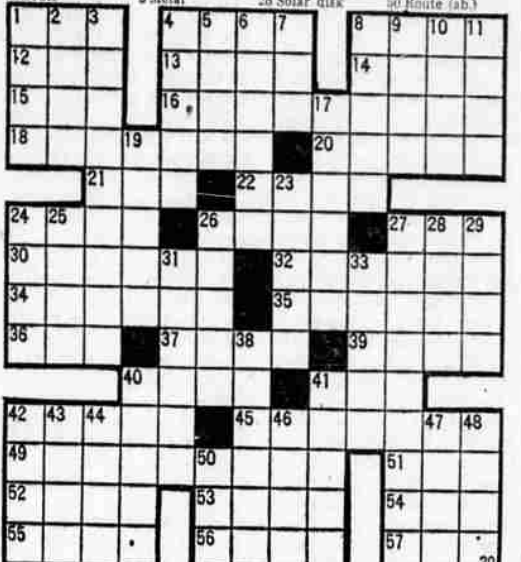
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Songfest

- ACROSS**
- 1 "Sing me a—"
 - 2 "Down by the old—"
 - 3 "—on the range"
 - 4 British pub beverage
 - 5 Assam silk worm
 - 6 Gens
 - 7 Corded fabric
 - 8 Short rhythmic poems
 - 9 Endearment term
 - 10 "Think—"
 - 11 Consume
 - 12 Goddess of discord
 - 13 Greatest quantity
 - 14 "Turkey—"
 - 15 Moccasin
 - 16 Internal part
 - 17 Fruit

Answer to Previous Puzzle

- DOWN**
- 1 Vistas
 - 2 Scatter
 - 3 "Blue—"
 - 4 Lease
 - 5 Villain's greeting
 - 6 "Little—"
 - 7 Echo
 - 8 Musical instrument
 - 9 Repeat
 - 10 Shield bearing
 - 11 Bound
 - 12 At a distance (comb. form)
 - 13 Otherwise
 - 14 Intention
 - 15 Shade trees
 - 16 Assent
 - 17 Diogenes
 - 18 Chalcedony
 - 19 Athena
 - 20 Subjugated
 - 21 Worth
 - 22 Metal
 - 23 Tarry
 - 24 Stripling
 - 25 Pits
 - 26 Enclosed
 - 27 Entanglements
 - 28 Lodging place
 - 29 Winter vehicles
 - 30 Believe
 - 31 Air (comb. form)
 - 32 Machinery part
 - 33 Light fog
 - 34 Ledger entry
 - 35 Algonquian
 - 36 Indian
 - 37 Lampreys
 - 38 Route (ab.)
 - 39 Price
 - 40 Wish
 - 41 "Rose—"
 - 42 Attack
 - 43 Lodging place
 - 44 Winter vehicles
 - 45 Believe
 - 46 Air (comb. form)
 - 47 "Bailey"
 - 48 Ledger entry
 - 49 Algonquian
 - 50 Indian
 - 51 Lampreys
 - 52 Route (ab.)



NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.

Borrowers Have Return Obligation

Dear Ann Landers: My girl friend and I found an ideal apartment near the store where we both work. The rent is reasonable and we love it here.

The other night when I plugged in the electric iron all the lights went out in the back part of the house. I knew I had blown a fuse. So I rapped on the landlord's door and asked him if he would help me out. He said I'd have to come down to the basement with him and hold the flashlight while he replaced the fuse.

Well, the old geezer made a pass at me. Can you imagine such a thing — with his own wife sitting upstairs in their living room? I told him if he ever tried anything funny again I'd brain him.

This morning there was a note in our mailbox saying the rent is going up \$30 next month. We can't pay more and we hate to move. Please tell us what to do about this rotten situation.—WE LIKE IT HERE

Dear Here: Tell the old lecher you suspect his little note was all in fun, but that if he was serious you will happily discuss the increase with his wife.

Dear Ann Landers: I'm a stenographer in a large office building. The other evening I was waiting for the bus in the rain and a nice gentleman whom I had seen dozens of times in the elevator came by and saw me standing there. He asked me if I lived north. When I said "Yes" he offered to drop me off. He told me his name but I was flustered and didn't get it.

I arrived home at the usual time and my mother saw me get out of the man's car. She asked who he was and I had to tell her I didn't know his name. She became furious and said no decent girl would allow herself to be picked up on a corner no matter what the weather. She told my dad and he gave me a long-winded lecture about sex maniacs and so on.

I feel they were off base and I'd like your opinion.—NO CHIP-PY.

Dear No: This man was not a stranger. You knew his face and his place of employment. Nonetheless you should have gotten his name. Next time listen when you are spoken to, Girl.

Dear Ann Landers: I was interested in your proclamation of "Borrowed Book Day." I am happy to report that it produced three books about which I had forgotten. And I returned one book myself. Now another problem pertaining to the same subject. I have a friend who borrows books and she does return them but in such disreputable condition that I have to throw them out.

She underlines in red pencil passages which she likes — folds over the pages (probably never heard of a book mark) and coffee cup circles appear here and there. The book jackets are invariably torn or missing.

Am I justified in asking this friend to replace the books she ruins? I've toyed with the idea but have never been able to do it.—CLARISSA

Dear Clarissa: Book-borrowers have an obligation to return books in the same condition they were in when borrowed. Next time you lend this woman a book let her know what is expected and make it clear that if she misses the mark she owes you a new book. This will probably put an end to the whole business — and that should be just dandy with you.

Confidential to In A Fix: Yes, you are. If you both lied about your ages and you were not of legal age, your parents can indeed have the marriage annulled.

Ann Landers will be glad to help you with your problems. Send them to her in care of this newspaper enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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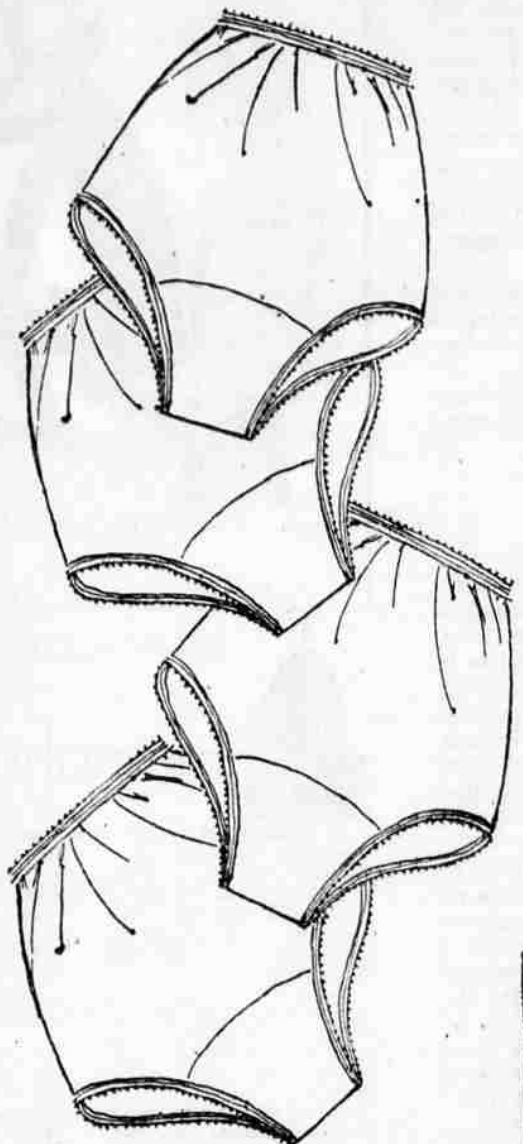
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