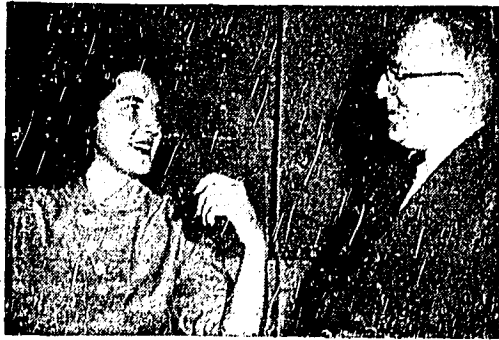


Andover Is Test Tube for Uncle Sam's Ball Point Pens



LUCILLE SHERRY, Andover nurse, tries out one of the new ball point pens as Stephen A. Boland, Andover postmaster, looks on.

years, says the oldtime pens stirred human emotions; made some people act as if they had had an unhappy childhood.

"We used to find the wooden pens tossed in the waste-basket, perhaps in a kind of desperation," said Boland. "People were always asking when the government was going to do something about post office pens."

"I hope the ball-point pen does as well in other places as it has in Andover. The pen and inkwell has been a problem through the years. We used an ink powder provided by the government, which I took in a quart bottle and did our best to keep it a clean flowing liquid."

"We used to put new pen points in the holders every morning, but somehow they managed to get bent up fast. Few people handle a pen in the same way. But the ball-point pen is smooth and facile. There is no mess."

"Why the spilling of an inkwell at one of the lobby desks on one occasion must have cost \$15 for the replacement of an under-padded human emotion; made some people act as if they had had an unhappy childhood."

"I am glad that we were chosen for this test. The public response has been big and enthusiastic. That's what the Postoffice Department wants to know, I am sure that the remainder of the test will show no pens lost or abused."

The Andover postoffice received a shipment of 50 pens. They are neat and easy to handle. The pen-line is sturdy but not masculine; clear and legible. Each is stamped "Property of the United States Postoffice."

Probably the nickled key-chain type of chain attached to the pen is not an indication of distrust. It could be applied psychology. How many times a man pockets a pen-cil not his own without ever a thought of stealing? He who steals a ball-point pen from a postoffice must snip or break the tie that binds.

Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield announces that an earlier difficulty in the ball-point pen operation was pilferage. This being minimized and will not be a major problem. It is believed, because there is a growing awareness of the severe sentence involved (up to \$500 fine and a year in jail) for anyone convicted of stealing these pens.

Washington is interested, too, in actual ink mileage. Examination of the pens used in the Andover test shows that the four-inch re-fill cartridge may be good for an entire year, or perhaps more. No re-fills have been sent because of this expectancy.

Comments from Andover people on P. O. ball-point pens:

"The finest thing that has come to a postoffice in a long time"—Joseph M. Hyman, executive.

"I like it because there is no need to keep dipping the pen in the ink."—Mrs. Henry Vigie, housewife.

"My! This pen is so wonderful, fully smooth."—Miss Lucille Sherry, hospital nurse.

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By JOHN J. MCKONE

Don't look now, but Andover is figuratively in a government test tube, being analyzed.

Uncle Sam wants to snoop a little, to know what lies deep in the human heart—the heart of a Postoffice pen user, that is.

The Postoffice Department wants to put ball-point pens for public use on the lobby desks of all post offices, but cautiously at first.

Andover is a test spot, the first in Massachusetts, in a second phase of the experiment.

Will that little larceny they say is in most of us crop out? Will people damage these pens thoughtlessly?

Six ball-point pens were put into service in the Andover post office lobby August 16. So far there is no blot on the town's escutcheon from the ball-point pen test. None stolen. Each is in good condition. It is the same with two ball-pointers undergoing trial at the Shawheen Village sub station.

The old post office wooden pen was a hardworking, heroic implement. It argued back at you, scraping and rasping, even spraying minute ink dots as it resisted the paper surface. So it passes without eulogy.

Stephen A. Boland, Andover postmaster since 1944 and a member of the postal service for 42

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