

# NEWSLETTER

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## INFORMATION MEETINGS BEGIN IN DECATUR

The first of a series of breakfast meetings for all salaried men in Decatur was held the third week in April as part of an effort to improve communications between local divisions and departments at Mueller Co.

The salaried group was divided into two sections and a separate meeting for each was held in the cafeteria, starting with breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and running until 8 a.m. The informal sessions will continue on a monthly schedule as long as they appear warranted.

These informational meetings are a result of suggestions received during the Tampa Manufacturing Institute program held for manufacturing supervisors in Decatur. Participants were asked for up to four suggestions that would help improve Mueller operations and the idea most often expressed was a need "to improve communications."

The second most popular suggestion from the class dealt with production scheduling, short runs or questions about the need to offer such a broad product line. Due to the interest in these areas, W.E. Murphy, vice president-marketing, was invited to talk to the first groups about these points as viewed by sales and marketing.

Murphy's remarks included comments about sales forecasting, efforts to educate customers to buy differently, competition, a need for a broad line, and the company being built on the tradition that Mueller Co. stands ready to meet the needs of our customers, whether through long run items or operating as a "job shop" at times.

To give an example of efforts to reduce inventory, Murphy talked about the Sales Department's "Asterisk" program which is a study of our product line, considering profitability, quantities sold, customers, etc. It is designed to reduce the inventory on the low profit and low volume items, making them available, however, through special requests for pricing and delivery. In other cases, items have been cancelled from our line when something else is available or the volume does not warrant making them.

The first session was devoted exclusively to these areas and Murphy's remarks, but future meetings are being designed to allow a free exchange of ideas, questions and comments regarding all aspects of company operations.

Top management is on hand to answer all questions, except those dealing with profits, sales and other confidential financial matters. In addition to the verbal exchanges, participants have the opportunity to submit written questions anonymously and these queries will become subjects for discussions at later meetings.

## NO SHUTDOWN OF U.S. PLANTS FOR VACATIONS

None of the U.S. plants will be shut down this year for vacations as part of an effort to improve product delivery and availability.

Chattanooga has not closed for vacations in recent years, but the Decatur and Brea plants have followed this shutdown practice for a period in early July for some time.

Paul Hickman, vice president-manufacturing, said customer demand dictates that we must not interrupt production, but at the same time it makes some planned maintenance, new equipment installation and improvement programs "extremely difficult" to schedule. Much of the heavy maintenance and construction work has been accomplished during vacation shutdown in previous years.

Mueller, Limited, in Sarnia, Ontario, will be closed for two weeks from July 31 through Aug. 11 for vacations.

## MUELLER CO. CITED BY U. S. CHAMBER

Mueller Co. is one of the 172 charter members of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States to be honored at the group's 60th annual meeting in Washington April 30 through May 2.

These 172 firms have maintained a continuous membership in the National Chamber since it was founded at the request of William Howard Taft, who was United States president at the time.

A large scroll will be on display at the annual meeting, listing the names of those firms which have maintained their continuous membership since about 1912 to 1913. The Chamber of Commerce of Decatur is also among those charter members to be cited.

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States currently has a membership of more than 30,000 business firms, local chambers, trade and professional groups, with an underlying membership of six to seven million individuals.

## GOVERNMENT IS BIG PART OF YOUR FAMILY BUDGET

In the past few years, Americans have tried to learn more about items they purchase to make sure they get the best for their money. Similarly, an equal effort is made to see that items are not harmful to the purchaser's well being.

Yet taxpaying consumers get less information on the largest item of their family budget than on any other item: The cost of government.

Last year, Americans spent about \$130 billion on food; \$40 billion on clothing; \$35 billion on new cars, and over \$130 billion on government. Yet they were given less information on what they were getting for their tax dollars than when they bought the latest brand of detergents.

Prior to the wage-price freeze, much publicity was given to inflationary price increases. There was frequent pressure on business men to refrain from passing on increased costs to consumers in the form of increased prices, plus calls for greater efficiency in the private sector.

However, Commerce Department data indicates that the cost to the consumer of purchasing the goods and services that government provides has risen at a considerably faster rate than any other item in the family budget.

For example, between 1958 and 1970, the prices of food and beverages went up 28.2%; furniture 29.6%; automobiles, 7.9%.

At the same time, the cost of government increased by 57.3% and in 1969-70 rose more than 50% faster than personal consumption items.

It would seem that this new consumer movement that requires knowledge of the full cost of finance charges of private purchases ought also to apply to what consumers get from government. A cost estimate of any new government program showing how much taxpayers will have to pay or how they will finance the new program would prove to some that the government does not have the ability to provide any goods or services without cost.

People must begin to understand that someone must work to produce and pay for the goods and services the government provides just as they must work to produce and pay for goods the private sector provides.

## Service Awards

The following Mueller employees received service awards during April.

### Chattanooga

30 Years: Sidney Porter, Jr., Willard F. Riddle, John L. Rice.

### Decatur

10 Years: Mary L. Easterling, John Whitehurst.

## Some Time Ago

## At MUELLER

Shortly after Mueller Co. acquired the Columbian Iron Works in Chattanooga in 1933, the MUELLER RECORD ran a story about men who were transferred there from Decatur. "Chattanooga, a leading industrial city of the Southland, has already won the hearts of the Decatur men, some of whom look forward to a happy home in this city of scenic beauty and historic interest." At the time of the writing, there were 178 employees making hydrants and valves at Columbian Iron Works. Today our Chattanooga Plant employs 950 people.

A July, 1936 issue of a Decatur newspaper says: "Accidents caused by slipping in the bathtub will soon be ended if a new non-skid tub which has just been patented by Robert Mueller, vice president of the Mueller Co. here, receives universal acceptance." According to the report, the new non-skid tub had a slight depression in the bottom to provide a recess into which a non-skid rubber pad was fitted.

Early in 1903 the first heat was run in the new brass foundry of the H. Mueller Manufacturing Company in a new 155 x 45-foot building. The foundry had 20 furnaces arranged around a central stack 100 feet high and the crucibles used with the furnaces had a capacity of 280 pounds of metal. A total of 14 tons of brass could be cast daily. (Seven furnaces produce an average of 50 tons of brass currently.)

### BILL MURPHY RE-ELECTED TO GAS INDUSTRY BOARD

W.E. Murphy, vice president-marketing, has been re-elected to the Board of Directors of the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association (GAMA) for a two-year term.

GAMA consists of more than 500 manufacturers who produce more than 90 per cent of all the gas equipment (including appliances, commercial and industrial products) sold in the United States.

He has been re-appointed also to the Gas Availability and Supply Committee of GAMA, a group formed to study natural gas supply and working with many agencies to assure the future of the industry.

### FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

Richard C. Tish, formerly assistant Iron Machine Shop foreman, has been named assistant Brass Foundry foreman in Decatur, effective April 10.

Robert E. Blakeman, Jr., electrician at Plant 4, has been promoted to assistant Plant 4 maintenance foreman (third shift), effective May 1.

## 625 WAYS TO BUILD THAT BASIC GATE VALVE

It would take two years to produce each kind of gate valve we have available if Mueller Co. in Chattanooga manufactured a different one each day of the year.

There are about 80 parts or pieces to a gate valve, but taking into consideration all of the variables available, we have about 625 ways to build the basic gate valve.

The design is about the same, but customers demand different valve openings, numerous ways to make connections, request various methods to operate valves and many other variables.

The valve openings available span from 2" to 48", and the valves vary in weight from a few pounds to nine tons. The direction for opening and closing the valve offers two more variables and the type of stem adds others. You can choose between the "O" ring stem seal or the conventional packing. The option to buy a valve with an operating nut or operating wheel is also offered.

Some of the materials and paints used internally can differ, but the types of inlet and outlet connections offer a wide selection. These connections include: hub ends, spigot ends, mechanical joint ends, universal ends, flanged ends, screwed ends and others.

As we get into some of the larger sizes we find some operating extras that offer a number of different possibilities. When considering a large valve you must specify the type of gearing and related equipment for its operation. Available are: Bevel gearing without grease case; Spur gearing without grease case; Spur gearing with grease case; Bevel gearing with grease case and a totally enclosed type or an extended type; Bevel gearing without grease case but with a NRS (non-rising stem) by-pass; Spur gearing without grease case but with NRS by-pass; Bevel gearing with grease case and NRS by-pass valve; Spur gearing with grease case and NRS by-pass valve; Valve with NRS by-pass valve; No gearing or by-pass. These are all available with or without an indicator showing the valve's position.

Confusing? Sometimes! Necessary? Yes! The demands of customers are many and varied. Our capacity to produce must be just as varying and as flexible!

## MUELLER LODGE HAS REMODELING

A complete remodeling and expansion of the custodian's living quarters at the Mueller Lodge, Decatur, is underway and should be finished by June 1.

The project will almost double the living space and improvements include a new kitchen and dining area, air conditioning, carpeting, paneling in some of the rooms, and major improvements in the bathroom.

There is no change apparent from the outside of the building which was moved to the property after World

War I. The building was originally used as a barracks at Millikin University, and after extensive remodeling it was used as the lodge building and living quarters for members of the Mueller family who visited there on holidays and special occasions.

After the remodeling project is complete, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth V. Jones will move in as custodians of the property. They succeed the Dwight Hodsons who retired late in the winter.

## IT'S NICE TO BE NEEDED

It is great to know that someone depends on you and needs you. It isn't just your family or your bowling team who leans on you or depends on you--it's those around you every day at work who expect you to do your share. Each individual is important and necessary to get the job done.

Last year in Brea 12 hourly employees at the Mueller Co. plant maintained a perfect job attendance record for the entire year. Since this number is only about 4.8 per cent of the total hourly work force of about 250, it points out how difficult it must be to be on the job every day on time, never leave early or miss a day of work except for prescribed time off.

Plant Manager Lloyd W. Darnell said, "A company can only be as good as those people who make up each production department. We sometimes fail to recognize the importance of being on the job or realize how difficult it is to maintain a record of perfect attendance. I personally feel this is an outstanding accomplishment and one of which each of these 12 persons should be very proud."

Those achieving perfect attendance for 1971 were:

**Agnes Kemmer, Joe Matos, Bernie Bussell, Arleigh Rasmusson, Clayton Travis, Ray Coffield, Bill Shoenfeld, Paul Duncan, Ralph Hall, Guadalupe Lopez, Carlos Melendez, Chester Hawes.**

## HOUSING STARTS DROP IN MARCH

Housing starts declined in March for the first time since September, but the level was still well ahead of March a year ago.

At a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 2,359,000 units, starts were 11 percent below February's revised 2,655,000 rate but strongly ahead of the 1,938,000 units of a year earlier.

Analysts weren't upset by the decline and one government spokesman said the March showing was "still a pretty healthy figure." Michael Sumichrast, chief economist for the National Association of Home Builders, called March a "good month" and added that starts should remain strong throughout the year.

Drops were registered in all sizes of units in March and they were off in all areas of the country except the Northeast, where there was an increase, according to the Commerce Department report.

## News Briefs

Two Chattanooga men will serve as officers for the coming year of the local chapter of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. Glen L. Cottrell, senior methods engineer, has been elected secretary and Rufus L. Yates, senior tool methods engineer, has been named treasurer. Jack D. Vincent, process control supervisor, has been elected vice chairman for the American Society of Metals group in Chattanooga.

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In Decatur, Richard L. Ferrill, standards engineer, has been elected treasurer of the local Society of Manufacturing Engineers. Company Editor Joe Penne has been elected president of the Central Illinois chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. The local group is made up of editors and public relations persons from business, industry, government and hospitals in Bloomington, Decatur, Peoria and Springfield.

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Beth Davenport, daughter of Byron L. Davenport, night janitor foreman, has been initiated into the National Honor Society. She is a senior at Lakeview High School.

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About 50 retired men from Mueller Co. in Decatur met in April at the Scanda House for their monthly meeting. Two men locally active in the American Association of Retired Persons talked to the group and discussed some of the services and advantages of the AARP membership. (A lifetime membership in this fine organization, fully paid by Mueller, has been given for some time to all those who retire from the company. If they retire early, they must be 55 to receive it. It automatically begins at age 63 in preparation for those who are nearing full retirement age.) The next meeting of retirees will be at the Scanda House on May 11.

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The women retirees have returned to the Elks Club for their meetings and get together on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:30 p.m. All women retirees from Mueller Co. are invited to attend and have lunch.

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During a recent oral polio vaccine program at Parson's School in Decatur, a team of Mueller wives worked together in the administration of the vaccine in a city-wide project. Their team was headed by Eva Luckenbill, who is a nurse with the school district, and volunteers Joan Brunner and Mary Lou Penne. They are the wives respectively of Senior Project Engineer Larry Luckenbill, Iron Foundry Furnace Operator Ron Brunner and Editor Joe Penne.

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The Assemblers bowling team jumped out to a big lead the first half of the season and then hung on to

edge out the Industrial Engineers to win the Mueller Bowling League title in Decatur.

Close behind the IEs were the Foundry, Tool Engineers and Brass Finishers teams, respectively. Members of the winning team are: Charlie Ater, Willie Erlenbusch, Galen Jenkins, Joe Chladny, Ed Nalefski and Charley Monroe.

Harold Whitacre with a 179 average for 90 games carried the best individual average. Other individual honors went to Murl Lee for his high game of 248 and to Dale Flaughter who had the best three-game series of 636. Dale Stanley was named the most improved bowler, raising his average by 16 pins this year.

At the sweepstakes roll-off, Bill Brooks and Ron Clutter took top money. Brooks had the high scratch series of the night with a 613 which, with his handicap, gave him a 673 for tops in that area. Clutter had the night's high game with a 241 and came in second in the handicap tournament with a 671 series.

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### CARSON COMPANY FOUNDER DIES

H.Y. Carson, founder of the H.Y. Carson Co. near Birmingham, Ala., died recently at the age of 83.

The Carson company was acquired by Mueller Co. late in 1971 and a subsidiary company formed under the name of Carson Clamp and Fitting Company. The firm produces ductile iron clamps to repair leaks in bell-joints in old cast iron pipe lines and distribution mains.

Mr. Carson was one of Birmingham's most prominent and active industrialists. He was vice chairman of the Birmingham Water Works Board and last year he was named "Best Citizen" by an area Chamber of Commerce. He served 24 years on the Jefferson County Board of Zoning Adjustment and the site for Jefferson State Junior College was donated by him.

He was a native of Danville, Ill., and obtained his B.S. degree in municipal and sanitary engineering at the University of Illinois. Mr. Carson studied at Harvard and at Massachusetts Institute of Technology for an advanced degree in sanitary engineering.

During his career, he worked as director of research for American Cast Iron Pipe Co. and then for James B. Clow & Sons. From 1921 to 1933 he was an engineering consultant with the U.S. Bureau of Standards.

## Retirements

The following list gives the retiree's job at time of retirement, years of service and date of retirement.

### Chattanooga

**Sam Roland**, sand muller operator in the Core Room, 19 years, 9 months and 15 days, April 28.