

The Reactor

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Saving Time in Small Ways

Time is a valuable commodity, and worth saving if it can be done easily. For example, I have saved myself several weeks, two minutes at a time, over a lifetime of working in suit and tie by wearing clip-on ties. They lower my blood pressure by saving the aggravation of having to retie the ordinary tie four times to achieve the length the clip-on achieves at the factory.

As a former commuter, I am delighted to work as well as live in Pacifica. Commuting is a pain. I would rather work two hours than commute one. Commuting wastes time and resources.

For a number of years I saved myself the time of shaving daily by letting my beard grow. In spite of the picture you see attached to this space, all I have left of that facial hair is a mustache of sorts.

There is one place I have discovered a major timesaver, one which saves me far more time than not commuting and not tying ties. When I get my daily assortment of mail, I review the upper right hand corner of each envelope. When it states "Bulk Rate," or shows a small amount of postage, especially with a fractional rate (12.9c) I can freely chuck it. By having my wastebasket next to

the table where the mail is sorted, it takes only one motion.

I used to open every bit of mail I got. I would read every word eagerly, hoping I would find something important to my life. I still do read all the first class I get. Often first class is vitally important and interesting. But I defer the bulk mail freely, provided I don't chuck it in the first place. I will stick it in my mail drawer, and review several days' worth at a time. The more urgent the summons on the outside, the closer I check the bulk-rate indicia. Some such mail I can dump at the rate of 2.57 pieces per second.

One exception was the new channel card from TCI, which was mailed a week before the April 1 switch of channels but did not arrive in my mail box until April 2. That was one of the few useful pieces of bulk-rate material in living memory. I know all the arguments in favor of bulk mail. Perhaps they are even valid. But in my distracted life, bulk-rate mail is simply clutter.

The new postage rates only serve to make me feel old. I still have 10-cent postcards I haven't mailed. You know how it is. They get buried in some drawer. I can't find them when I need them, so I buy more and there you are. I just used up some 13-cent postcard stamps last week, just as the price for postcards went to 15 cents. How many of us have old postcards sitting in a drawer with obsolete postage on them?

One other thing I resent. I don't think large mailers should get a break on first-class rates, like 20 cents for a first-class letter it costs me 25 cents to mail. I know. They do the post office's work for them, but I still resent it. I don't mail enough to presort my mail. How can you presort two letters at a time. But I still think that an argument could be made for charging me 15 cents for my personal letters, and charging PG&E 30 cents, PROVIDED they presort. If they don't pre-sort, then charge them 35 cents.

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