'Tis The Season

Posted on Dec 04, Posted by Lois Lowry Category Uncategorized

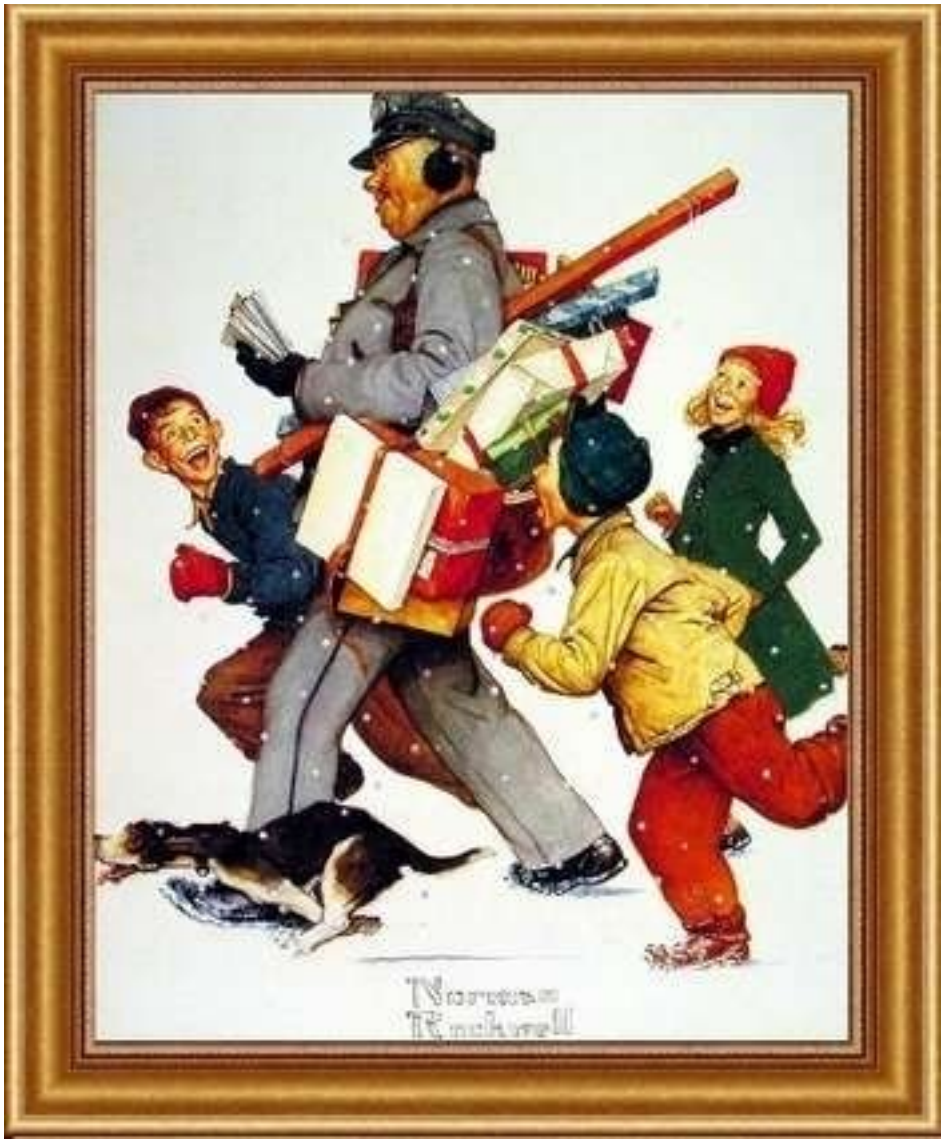
I am trying to be jolly despite a plumbing crisis.

The plumber is due here by 11 AM. leaving me time to keep my dental apointment at 1 PM. Plumber and dentist? Same day? Is that fair?

My car is loaded with packages to go to the post office. Yes, Christmas gifts. Yes, it is all done. People hate me when I tell them that. But it is because I have to mail things to Germany that I get my Christmas shopping done very early, usually right after Thanksgiving. I thereby manage to avoid the long Xmas lines at the PO, though I make up for it at tax time, when I am always last-minute for some reason.

I have two favorite post office stories. The first did not happen to me but to someone else, a woman who was having a horrible day in every way but finally found herself, after a long wait, at the post office counter. The PO guy said, "How's it going?" She almost burst into tears at the unexpected bit of human commiseration, and she said, "Well, horrible, if you want to know the truth. It took me forever to find a parking place, and then I stepped out of the car into a huge puddle so my feet are soaking wet, and I didn't have change for the meter so I'll probably get a ticket, and now I've been standing in this line for twenty minutes and I'm going to be late for an appointment, and..." The PO guy looked down at the package she had placed on the counter and said, "I meant: how's it going? Priority? Media?"

And this one DID happen to me, many years ago. I lived in a tiny seaside village with a very small post office. I had completely forgotten to mail my estimated tax payment, which a self-employed person must pay quarterly, and so I took it to the post office a day late. I explained that to the postmistress, threw myself on her mercy, and asked if she could postmark it with the date of the previous day. She said a firm no. It would be illegal, she pointed out. She was required to abide by the law and she had been postmistress for a zillion years and she had never once misrepresented the date in that way. Then she picked up my enevelope, and picked up her postmarking stamp gizmo, and said, "I can blur it, though."



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