The UPS truck pulled up for a typical delivery of regular brown boxes and parcels. Verna Ball, manager of package shipment and receiving for Marietta College, began to stack the shipment onto her dolly to take into the mailroom. She thought the packages were all normal until the driver threw out something unusual from the back of the truck. Four tires came rolling out with the address and postage printed directly on the side. Ball laughed when the driver simply said, “I guess someone is going to need these to get home.”

Verna Ball has been sorting the packages of all shapes and sizes, typical or one-of-a-kind, at Marietta College for students and faculty since the mid 90s. At a rate of about 60 boxes coming each day, the work never stops.

“We get a little bit of everything,” said Ball, “nothing really surprises me anymore.”

Ball started working for the College in 1996 as an employee for building services. Two years later, an opening came up in the mailroom. She applied and got the job and has been working with packages ever since.

Victoria Brown, the mailroom manager, was already working in the mailroom when Ball was hired. She thinks Ball has always been a hard and dedicated worker. “She’s come a long way and worked her way to a better job than when she started, now that she uses the computer and knows all the post office mailing regulations.”
Ball has seen the excitement on literally thousands of students’ faces when packages arrive. Her office gets buried on an annual basis in the fall when books and supplies get shipped in to students from all across the country and the world.

One student used to mail something he sold on Ebay almost everyday. He would sometimes send some pretty ridiculous thing in the mail according to Ball. “He mailed the grill of a car one time to somebody. He used lots of our tape to mail books and tailpipes and all sorts of things.”

One large package, a Bose stereo system, was recently brought to the mailroom by a student to be sent to China. Ball said that students ship things, no matter what the costs can be. “It weighs so much that it will cost over $700 to ship.”

Many students may not realize that they already knew Ball’s work before they even thought about coming to school at Marietta College. All bulk mailings are prepared and sorted by Verna. These include every pamphlet, informational letter, and guide sent out to perspective students.

Ball, a Marietta native, now lives in Lowell. She’s raised her family in the area and her son even graduated from Marietta College.

“The best part of this job is definitely the interaction I have with students. The look on their faces when they’re surprised by a package is when its best.”

Even though so many students have seen her and know her, she describes herself as a very shy person. “Even doing (an interview) like this is something I wouldn’t normally do.”