

Philatelic Society of Lancaster County



An Affiliate of the American Philatelic Society: James Buchanan Chapter, # 173

Club Meeting: Wednesday, 14 October 2009

Bourse opens at 6:30 PM and Meeting starts at 7:00 PM

BlueBird Commons / Woodcrest Villa. **Tonight's host:** Lucy Eyster

Message from the President

Wm. P. Snyder

The presentation last month by Lou DiFelice on Washington Franklin stamps was superb, one of the very best presentations ever at our LCPS meetings. Thanks, Lou, for your outstanding contribution to our understanding of this interesting and challenging group of American stamps.

Two items in the 5 October issue of *Linn's* offer interesting perspectives on our hobby. First, philately clearly evokes strong passions. A lawsuit by Ken Lawrence against eight former APS directors and their countersuit against Lawrence was dismissed by a PA court on 11 September. The suits alleged defamation, conspiracy, and mis/malfiance incident to campaign ads carried by the *American Philate-*

list prior to the 2007 APS Board elections. Second, stamp collecting may have a salutatory economic dimension. *Linn's* reports that prices for 19th and 20th century stamps, fine/very fine grade, are down slightly in recent months but have fallen only about 1.5% over the past year. Clearly stamp prices are less volatile than those of stocks and most other very popular collectibles.

Daily visits to my mailbox typically find four or five letters, all mailed at less than the first class rate. There are usually two from state or federal politicians requesting campaign contributions. Then there are a couple requesting that I renew my subscription to a magazine I no longer wish to

read. All end up in my circular file. But this week brought a solicitation of interest. It was from the National Postal Museum at the Smithsonian. The letter included a membership application at \$35 for an individual and \$50 for a family, with about two thirds of these amounts being tax deductible. Membership fees, the solicitation promised, will be used to assist the museum with exhibits, educational programs, and outreach activities. The 22 October club trip to this museum offers members a chance to discuss the membership campaign with staffers there. And I hope all those going to Washington will have a knowledgeable and wonderful trip. See you all in October.

Bill

October Program: Club Member Auction

It won't be long until the fall club auction. Start cleaning out your duplicates, and take along your gold card for new material you may buy.

The rules remain the same as in previous auctions. The minimum bid is \$1.00. The minimum increment when bidding is 50¢. Each club member is limited to 10 lots. You will be assigned a number when you arrive.

Please place this number on all your lots. When possible, please attach an item/lot description including catalogue number and value if appropriate and minimum bid accepted. This will speed things up and prevent any misconceptions and insure a smooth and enjoyable fall auction.

FDR Estate Auction Prevue

Photo courtesy of HR Harmer



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October-2009

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PSLC Meets the second Wednesday of the month (except August) at BlueBird Commons/ Wood crest Villa at 7:00 PM

President:

William P. Snyder

Vice President:

John Ahlfeld

Secretary:

Joy Bouchard

Treasurer:

Clair Smith

Newsletter Editor:

Paul Petersen; 717.299.5640



Club Bus Trip

Only a week or so until we leave for the NPM in DC. Remember the date: **Thursday, 22 October**. The bus leaves the Reading area at **7:00 AM** and Lancaster at **7:30 PM** from the Oregon Pike side of AC Moore. The bus will leave DC at **6:00 PM** sharp. This will be a full day with lots to do at the postal museum and the other capital sites. **Questions?** Please call Roy Baardsen, Trekmeister, at (610) 927-3435.



READING STAMP SHOW

Let's support our fellow stamp club in their 9th annual show. The dealers are ready, the food is great, the room is comfortable, and the fellowship is priceless.

When: Saturday, 7th November

Time: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

LEESPORT FARMERS MARKET

Look for sign on Route 61 north of Leesport. Go one block east.

Secretary's & Treasurer's Reports

P. Petersen & Clair Smith: September 2009

Opening: Bill Snyder sounded the gavel and had several announcements. He formed two *ad hoc* committees. 1.) **Nominations Committee** with Eleanor Wheeler (Chairperson), Diane Mæek, and Paul Petersen. They were charged to identify a name for the VP position for announcement in October and election in November. 2.) **Christmas Party Committee** with Richard Wheeler (Chairman) and Lucy Eyster. Eleanor W. will be an *ex officio* member. 2010 President, John Ahlfeld will be tasked with appointing a Picnic Committee for the August, 2010 annual event.

Additional Announcements: Bill announced the 7th November Stamp Show by the Reading Stamp Club in Leesport and the 18-20th September show in Valley Forge. Bill solicited membership comments regarding the August Picnic, and all feedback

regarding the site, food, organization, publicity, and activities was positive. Lucy E. announced that she has a copy of *Le Poste* and some copies of the *EFO Journal* which are free for the asking.

Club Member Interest Inventory: Lucy E. announced that she has copies of the completed document for club members.

Club Trip: Roy Baardsen announced that through Tom Howard, the NPM Curator, Cheryl R. Ganz has offered to give the club a personal tour of the facility. And through contacts with Peter Baney, there is a possibility of a club tour of the US Capitol. Enthusiastic voice approval for these tours by membership was noted.

July Minutes: The minutes were approved as published.

September Drawing: Bill S. won the drawing this month.

Membership: Lucy E. reported

that 31 club members signed the attendance roster. She introduced new member, Jack Deaner whose primary area of collecting is worldwide. Another worldwide collector, Carmen Spadaro visited the club. He is a member of the Reading Club and would like to join PSLC.

Nominations Committee: Eleanor W. solicited club members' interests to serve as 2010 VP.

September Program: Club member Lou DiFelice gave an informative PowerPoint presentation on the Thord Bureau Issue, more popularly known as The Washington Franklins.

The Treasury:

Opening: \$4,803.02 (01 July)

Income: \$5.40

Expenses: \$69.47

Closing: \$4,738.95 (31 August)

CDs: Two CDs totaling \$4345.60 are with Fulton Bank.

Stamp Ideas for Your Kids & Grandkids

Many years ago my wife enjoyed playing with her great aunt's button box. With her aunt's prompting, she would sort them by size, color, shape, and special characteristics such as those with jewels or plastic vs. metal. Kids have a natural desire to sort and organize their world into categories that they understand.

Stamps offer many more activities than the button box. Remember that not all kids will do these activities all on their own. They must be engaged. Furthermore, the difficulty level of the activities must be adjusted for a given child's age.

In other words, use fewer stamps and simpler concepts for younger children.

Using your many duplicates from the cigar box, consider the following activities when engaging with your kids and grandkids. Obviously you will have to vary your games to match the stamps. The following ideas are based on a given lot of stamps that was available. They were for a family with kids from four through twelve. You will see that there are a lot of learning opportunities with these philatelic activities.

● Separate the square, rectangular, and traingulars.

● Line up the square stamps by size from large to small.

● Separate the stamps by color. For older children, sort by shades of red (blue, etc.).

● Find stamps with flags, Statue of Liberty's. Which are US flags? Name some foreign countries.

● Find stamps with holes in them (ie. perfin's)? What do they say?

● Identify and sort stamps by transportation (ie. planes, boats, cars, etc.); Sort by colors.

● Find oriental stamps. (Show then how to separate Japan from China.)

● Any baseball stamps? Hanukkah stamps? \$1.00 stamps? Any very old stamps?



Miscellaneous Club Notes: Programs/Hosts, Membership, & Shows

2009 Programs & Snacks:

14 October: Club Auction.
Lucy Eyster, Host

11 November: Show & Tell
for all club members: John
Ahlfeld. Diane Meek, Host

9 December: Christmas Party.
No host this month.

Happy New Year

2010 Programs

13 January: Club Auction.
John Ahlfeld, Host

10 February: *King George V
and the Royal Collection:* Paul
Petersen

Membership: Our newest
members: 1.) Bob Runkle of
Siegel, PA recently rejoined
the club. He collects North Borneo,
and works with a local junior collector's
group. 2.) Jack Deaner from Millersville
collects worldwide stamps

Upcoming show reminders:
Some 1st Sunday Stamp Shows,
Farm & Home Center: • 6 Dec

• 07 Mar 2010, • 06 June,
01 August, •03 October, •05
December (Dates are subject
to change, so please verify.)

Reading Stamp Show: Saturday,
7 November, Leesport

Gettypex: Saturday, 17 October,
New Oxford, PA

2010 Elections: Nominations
will be in October with elections
to follow in November. Please
consider volunteering your time
to help the club.

October Bio: Dennis Shumaker

Dennis Shumaker and his wife live in Marietta where he has had a private practice law firm since 1987. Previous work was in management, then senior legal staff positions in the computer industry. He joined PSLC a few years ago after reading an article in *AP* on the importance of joining a local stamp club.

Dennis started collecting in elementary school with his friends. This was heightened by his cousin's gift of a partially filled world-wide album. He then narrowed down to the US, UN, UK, Canada, and some other European countries.

With adolescence came the temporary hiatus until he was thirty. Here a wise dealer advised him to collect stamps that corresponded to his other interests. As a Civil War buff, patriotic covers were just the thing.

Dennis' most prized item is a Confederate patriotic cover from the Walcott Collection. CSA patriotics are rare, as in the original collection were 3113 Federal covers to only a few hundred Confederate items.

Would he ever like to exhibit? Yes, he would, but he needs the free time. Besides his law practice, he collects rare books, rocks, minerals, and gems.

Dennis recommends collecting for the chase of the material more than the investment. This may pan out, but don't count on a profit. He would also like to know if other club members are interested in patriotic covers. If anyone would like to start collecting this area, he would be glad to help them get started.

Humorous Auction Anecdotes from the Master of Auctions, Jacques C. Schiff

Since the Philatelic Society of Lancaster County is hosting an auction this month, it might be apropos to include some humorous anecdotes from auctions in the past.

Jacques C. Schiff, Jr. writes a regular column in *US Stamp News*, and in the 07/09 issue (pg. 26), he included several comedic instances from prior auctions.

Schiff is well known in the auction business, so he has had the opportunity to observe human nature over the years. You will note that you cannot make some of these anecdotes up!

A woman participant in one of Schiff's auctions made the opening bid on several items early in the process. After many unsuccessful attempts she ceased bidding but remained until closure.

At that point she approached Schiff telling him that he had just insulted her.

Schiff asked her what this was all about. She went on to explain why she was hurt.

She raised her hand for the items she wanted, and then immediately after this, Schiff went to others and accepted their higher bids for the lots and thus deprived her of all of the stamps she wanted to buy.

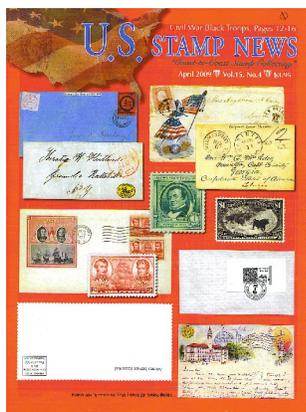
Schiff tried to educate her how an auction worked, but she was unwilling to learn.

In another instance, a gentleman submitted mail bids and called the auction house a day after the sale. He wanted to know what lots he won. Schiff responded that they had no record of the man as an auction bidder.

The man explained that he had just sent in his bids, and that they may still be en route. He would wait a few days and then call again to see which lots he had won in the auction. He hung up.

One of the best was a call to Schiff by a man who had requested a catalogue and the prices realized list for an upcoming auction.

His complaint was that he had received only the catalogue in the mail. When told that he would only receive the prices realized after the auction, he responded without guile "How do you expect me to know how much to bid if I did not receive the realizations prior to the auction?"





Musings from the editor

Stamp Value and Condition Part-III

A stamp catalogue value is primarily based on its centering with the assumption that the glue (in mint stamps) is intact and there are no defects in the stamp (thins, scuffs, etc.). Superb centering will command greater than catalogue values, and defects will greatly diminish the value.

A lot of bad things can happen to that little piece of paper when handled and stored over the years. And for many stamps, things do go wrong. It doesn't take much. This explains why there are so few of the best conditioned stamps and why they are pricey. It also shows that a great stamp can be severely reduced in price given a barely noticeable crease or pulled perf.

How many of us have inherited a very old album with beautiful sets that are "hinged" into place. Other than mucilage, hinges were all they had years ago. Alas, these hinges usually cut a stamp's value in half. Recall that light hinge mark on a mint Scott 245 (graded at 95) which reduced the value by \$80,000!

There are miscellaneous factors as well. Perfins, or stamps which contain perforated initials, for example, are considered damaged stamps by many collectors. These are usually undesirable for

a general collection and are thus much less than catalogue value. However, the punched out holes may raise the price of a stamp for a specialized perfins collection when a unique company logo is found on a stamp. But *caveat emptor*, as perfins can be forged most easily.

To determine the "true" value of a stamp, it is important to know the condition of that stamp whenever buying or selling. Determine the stamp's centering and then check for defects. When purchasing expensive stamps, become an informed consumer. Learn & take control.

For better US or foreign stamps, use a specialized catalogue and read the details. With older stamps there may sometimes be exceptions to the very-fine centering standard when lesser centered stamps may still command a good price. In olden days stamps were poorly centered due to the limited technology in some cases or in the very close printing of stamps packed together on a pane.

But this is easier said than done. Forgeries and technology make fine bedfellows.

The watermark detector and magnifier have been emphasized, but there is another way available to some collectors with a quality scanner (1200-2400) and computer with lots of memory.

Scan both sides of the stamp and examine them on the computer screen. Greatly enlarged, you can see scuffs, tears, creases, and other items that are hardly visible to the naked eye. Look for beads of glue on torn ends of perforations, as this may be evidence of reguming.

Is there any upside to stamp defects? Yes, especially with minimal defects. A beautifully centered stamp with a barely noticeable defect will sell at a small proportion of catalogue value, and this will allow you to own some stamps that you might not be able to own otherwise. It will certainly be more than a space filler with an obvious torn corner that you would be able to buy for \$1.00.

When looking for a bargain, review auction catalogues for well-centered stamps with minor deficits. Club auctions are a good source of these deals.

My instructors at the APS Market Place course, Irv Miller and Clark Frazier, described an additional variable to value stamps. It can supersede other detractors.

They call this the "Wow" factor. It occurs when one views a stamp and catches one's breath, especially with classic stamps. While not a function of the catalogue, the "Wow" factor will sometimes be noticed in a dealer's stock and/or an auction catalogue. This is the sheer attractiveness of a stamp as a whole, perfection in almost every way. It may override a small deficit or other problem.

I have spoken before on expertizing, but in the 03 August *Linn's* (pg. 36-7) there was something new. This was in a two-page spread by PSAG or Philatelic Stamp Authentication and Grading.

While centering is easy to determine, soundness requires additional expertise. In light of this, PSAG uses a *Foster & Freeman VSC-4 Plus Color Video Spectral Comparator!* What else needs to be said? Ed □



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