

# Philatelic Society of Lancaster County



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

## Club Meeting: Wednesday, 9 March 2011

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

Bluebird Commons / Woodcrest Villa. **Tonight's host:** Dick Shaefer

**Stamp Trading** to Begin Following the Evening's Program

## Message from the President

Greetings all. Punxatawney Phil said we're due for an early spring. Well, I don't know if he's correct this year, but we have seen a substantial change since then. Hopefully, the last of the nasty stuff will soon be behind us, and we can begin to dry out.

Our February meeting had us viewing an interesting topic, Crash Mail. This brings up another subject, Program Presentations. At our yearly meeting of the Board, we discussed various options regarding the 2011 Programs. Some board members volunteered to present, but we graciously declined be-

cause they had just presented in the past, and we are striving to find new topics. Personally I voted against APS slide shows because I found them to be very dark and cumbersome, requiring the use of two antiquated machines (a slide projector and a cassette player) to present. As soon as APS converts to DVDs, I'll happily agree to use them again. So, finally we ironed out the balance of the year at our January membership meeting by doing a "group" thing.

So, why am I saying all this? If you'll review the Programs list each month, you'll find that it's gener-

ally the same people doing so from year to year. Putting together a Power Point presentation is a time consuming effort and is something that the rest of us (myself included) **need to learn**. Paul Petersen has always said that he'd help us overcome our technophobia if we'd only ask him. Hopefully there are others out there that could step up and aid us, giving Paul a bit of a break (he volunteers for everything).

So how about we make this the year that each of us creates (or starts) a Power Point presentation (or a few) to be shown in future years? **Continued on Pg. 2**

## 1.) Lancopex Lick 'n Stick; 2.) Unusual Philatelics

Jim Boyles & Lucy Eyster

Tonight's programs promise to be a multi-sensory event. Jim will start with our annual kick-off event, as we attach stamps and labels to the invitations for Lancopex-2011 to be held 29-30 April.

Do you ever wonder about some of those unusual stamps, the ones that contain volcano dust or wood fibers from the *HMS Bounty*? Or how about those stamps that can be played on a record player? Some of these items are quite creative and appro-

priate, while others are produced for the purpose of making money! This is the world of unusual stamps.

Lucy Eyster will follow Lick 'n Stick with a DVD from the America Topical Association entitled "Eclectic Collecting." This includes some of the more unusual philatelic material out there. Lucy will then display and describe some of the more unusual materials from her personal collection of "oddities and curiosities."

### A Stamp That Glows



Courtesy of **Stamp Magazine** (5/10, pg. 8) is "The Dong with a Luminous Nose" from a nonsense poem of the same name by Edward Lear. This new stamp from Bailiwick of Jersey actually glows.

**Volume 74, No. 3**

**March, 2011**

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PSLC Meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except August) at The Bluebird Commons / Woodcrest Villa, 2000 Harrisburg Ave, Lancaster, PA at 7:00 PM. For club info, call Lucy Eyster: 717.735-2586

**President:**

John M. Bray

**Vice President:**

Vacant

**Secretary:**

Joy Bouchard

**Treasurer:**

Lou DiFelice

**Newsletter Editor:**

Paul Petersen; 717.299.5640

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## March Bio:

### Gareth Diem

As a young adult Gareth purchased U.S. and worldwide albums complete with stamps. For several years he was a diligent collector until his construction business priorities took over. Then just a few years ago his grandson saw his old albums, loved them, and they have collected together since.

To learn more about stamps, Gareth attended Lancopex and was encouraged to join the club. Here he notes that the learning curve has been phenomenal. He and his 11 y/o grandson enjoy going to shows and sharing the hobby. His four grown children and other eight grandchildren do not have an interest in collecting.

Gareth's U.S. holdings are complete from 1930-1958 (both mint and used), so he is seeking older stamps (his favorites) and newer issues. He has some plate blocks and First Day Covers to round out the collection. As a new collector, he realizes that there are many technical aspects in the hobby of philately that present a variety of challenges.

Jennie and Gareth have been married 53 years, and in retirement, he is as busy as ever. This detracts from his collecting. One of the organizations where he gives his time is "Tall Cedars" which raises money for muscular dystrophy. A few years ago he was head of this over 14,000 member national association.

Among other of Gareth's organizations are The Boy Scouts. Given his interest in youth, he would love to see the club involved with the BSA and other youth groups so that they can learn about the stamp hobby.

## February Minutes and Treasury

### Joy Bouchard & Lou DiFelice

**Opening:** President John M. Bray opened the meeting and updated the club members on his progress in seeking youth venues. Any club members who wish to volunteer will need to be certified through the State Police, and/or the Boy Scouts. See John for information.

**Visitor:** David Hunt of the Reading Club visited tonight, and he will be presenting the July program. Club member Carl Haffley brought a friend, Melanie.

**Membership:** Lucy Eyster introduced new members Mike Bach and Morgan Kaspar.

**Minutes:** The February minutes were approved as written by voice vote.

**Drawing:** This was won by Dick Schaefer.

**Lancopex:** Jim Boyles announced that the club cachet will be associated with the new stamps denoting the 100th Anniversary of the start of the U.S. Civil War. Lou DiFelice volunteered to do a write up of this for the printed Lancopex program.

Jim circulated a list to sign up as a patron of the show for \$5/person. He will have sign-up sheets for various tasks at the March meeting. Save Thur/Sat, 28-30 April to help out. John Brownell will look into a catering service for coffee, meals, and snacks throughout the event. This will cost about \$140, and the club will lose

some income from our own snack stand. John and Jim will look further into this.

**Club Trip:** Roy Baardsen took a count of hands of those interested in the ASDA Nat'l Postage Stamp Show at the Hotel New Yorker in October. Some interest was expressed.

**Program:** The February topic was a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Steve Berlin entitled "The Devil's Mail." It was narrated by Dick Colberg.

### Treasury Report

Opening: \$2,838.93 (1 Jan)

Income: \$851.14

Expenses: \$302.91

Closing: \$3,387.16 (31 Jan)

3-CDs totaling \$6164.85 due in 2012-13.

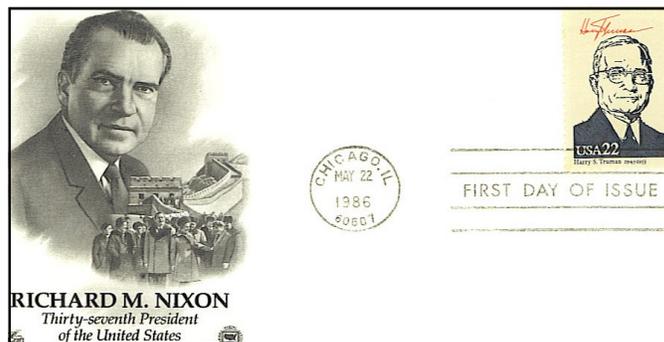
## President

Continued from Pg. 1

To begin, come up with a concept, mapping out how you'd like it to flow. Decide which items to present while also writing a narrative, and then ask for help and advice to actually create it. Your first PowerPoint presentation may be a bit daunting (as the unknown usually is), but subsequent ones will be all that easier.

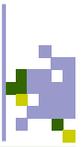
Now, grab a sheet of paper and jot down some ideas so that you can soon enlighten us with your unique outlook on stamp collecting. See you on Wednesday. *jb*

## What's unusual about this cover?



Take a look at the above cover. Something is not quite right. USPS released a set of four miniature sheets containing 36 stamps depicting The White House and 35 presidents at the Ameripex Int'l Stamp Show in Chicago. This ran from 22 May to 1 June 1986. Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan were not included as they were alive at printing. Richard M. Nixon did not pass away until 1994.

This Artcraft cachet commemorates Nixon's 1972 visit to China with the first lady. Yet the cover contains a First Day Cancel on a Harry S. Truman stamp from the 5/86 presidential set. Feedback from The Washington Press has not yet been received. What is your theory?



## Miscellaneous Club Notes: Programs/Hosts, Shows, and Trip

### 2011 Programs and Hosts

**9 March:** *Lick 'n Stick for Lancopex.* + *ATA DVD "Eclectic Collecting"* + *Some of my Strange Stamps*, Lucy Eyster. **Host:** Dick Shaefer

**13 April:** *A Philatelic Tour of Bermuda*, Al Schaub. **Host:** Eleanor Wheeler

**11 May:** Club Auction. **Host:** Diane Meek

**8 June:** *Precancels for Fun: Part III*, RD Noble and Woody

Hann. **Host:** Lou Leidig

**13 July:** *Errors, Freaks & Oddities* by David Hunt. **Host:** Paul Petersen

**10 August:** Club Picnic. No Host this month.

**14 September:** Club Auction. **Host:** Lou DiFelice

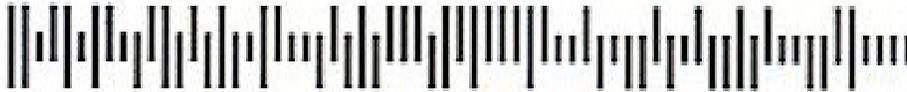
**12 October:** Show 'n Tell: Your best stuff. **Host:** Lucy Eyster

**9 November:** Topic-TBA. **Host:** John Ahlfeld

**14 December:** Dinner.

**Upcoming Show Reminders:** *Some Sunday Stamp Shows*, Farm & Home Center: • 26 June, • 21 August, • 2 October, • 4 December (Please verify ahead with Jim-394-5118.) *Lancopex*, Fri/Sat, 29-30 April 2011.

**Marilyn & Chuck Shirley** would enjoy hearing from you. Send a note or card (and some stamps!) to them at *Oak Leaf Manor*, 2101 Waubank Rd. Millersville, PA 17551



We are all aware that most mail is not touched by human hands between our outgoing mailbox and its delivery site. It is all automated. Postal employee Al Pugliesi recently wrote about this in the Jan/Feb 2011 edition of *Stamp Insider* (pgs 22-25).

When the mail is dumped, handlers will manually pull bulky mail pieces and/or non mail items from the pile. The rest enters the **AFCS** (Advanced Facer Canceler) machine via a series of belts and gates. The mail will be faced so that the stamp is in the proper position for canceling.

First the stamp is cancelled. Then a red-orange or pink fluorescent bar code is placed on the back of the item. This bar code is associated with the destination address but the address is not part of this code. However, the delivery address is concurrently read by machine and placed into the computer system. This unique pink bar code will be used later to retrieve the destination address.

Furthermore, this pink bar code contains data regarding the identification of the processing plant, the machine which was used to process this particular piece of mail, and the time of processing within a half hour.

While in the AFCS, any mail with invalid or untagged stamps are shunted into a reject bin for separate handling. Here further determinations will be made.

The mail next goes into the **DIOSS/DBCS-OSS** (delivery barcode output subsystem) machine. The DIOSS machine now reads the pink bar code on the back of the letter. From this reading, the computer-stored delivery destination information is retrieved. The machine now sprays a barcode in black on the front of the envelope which contains all the delivery information. Mail is then sorted by this machine into appropriate carrier routes in preparation for delivery.

There is also the **CIOSS** machine which determines if any of the mail is undeliverable, i.e. mail with expired forwarding addresses or destinations that have conflicting data or ones that do not exist at all. A yellow **NIXIE** (A.K.A. a "Return to Sender" label) is printed and placed on the envelope for return delivery.

Another interesting bit of technology occurs when there is illegible handwriting. Here the computer defaults to another procedure. (Recall that the letter has already been cancelled and given a pink bar code on the back.) The computer makes a scan of the

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Please clip this notice, complete it, and turn in with \$10 to Lucy Eyster at the March club meeting. You may also mail it to Lucy at 2001 Harrisburg Pk, B503, Lancaster, PA 17601

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please encourage your non-member stamp collector friends to join and enjoy the benefits of membership. Make this your New Year's resolution: "Every member get a member."

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

front side of the envelope and sends it to a remote facility where clerks will try to decipher the handwriting. If they can determine this successfully, they will enter the destination address via keyboard to the DIOSS/DBCS-OSS machine.

The letter with the illegible handwriting will then be run through the DIOSS/DBCS again where the pink bar code will now retrieve the updated destination address, and it is correctly sent on its way. Even here, the mail is never touched by hand.

Author Al Pugliesi stressed the impact of technology, stating that it takes only two USPS employees to run the DIOSS/DBCS-OSS machine where it had previously taken 16 employees to use the previous **LSM** or Letter Sorting Machine.

He recommends a DIOSS video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORT6YsLobsg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORT6YsLobsg) to see this all in action.



## Musings: *Keep some of those hard copies*

If it weren't for hard copies such as the Babylonian and Assyrian tablets, we would have very little information about early history. Then add the Egyptian papyrus documents, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Guttenberg's press, and we have a much better idea of antecedent events & history.

Let's move to the digital age. I am fascinated by technology and old enough to be cynical. There's the good, the bad, and the ugly, not to mention the loss of worksite productivity as employees surf the web all day, but this is another column.

One good/bad issue of the digital age is storage. We can keep a gazillion snaps, documents, books and journals on a small device, and it is quite handy and all. One can even add music and video to this mix.

On the other hand, what happens to our data when the power goes out or when the next evolution of digital storage and reading devices comes along and we can't retrieve what we have? I own a nearly full zip drive from the early millennium, but opening it up is the challenge. This is similar to the 8-track music aficionados; they can own them, but how do they play them now? In ten years?

Consider the photos of our kids and grandkids. Current technology makes picture showing a little different than it used to be. People rarely take out a photo album or envelope of snaps. Instead they get out their cell phone, tablet, or coffee table digital display and turn it on or plug

it in. Now, that's technology!

In my photo albums I have snaps from extended family in Buffalo to about seven (7) years ago. Now the images of these people are attached to digital email documents somewhere in my computer's cyber space. I have no hard copies and no idea where the digital images are. The same goes with electronically stored emails from my kids. I'm not blaming technology. I admit, I'm just not diligent in taking a disk to the drug store for copies.

Stored in my attic are many letters. Some are from my family when I was in the service or away at college. There are letters to me from friends while I was at Boy Scout Camp. There are other letters on college stationary as my fiancé and friends and I corresponded years ago. These letters are all that I have left from some of the writers.

Several colleagues have shared with me that the only way that they hear from their grandkids is through text messaging on their telephone or via FaceBook. And in reality, this current state probably promotes more inter-generational communication than letter writing did within my family and friends 40 years ago. We've got to get over it, as kids love this stuff. And when I say "kids," I mean those under forty!

So, what have we gained/lost?

The quantity of communication is pretty good as long as grandpa keeps up with the technology. Kids would text or email all day if we or their employers let them. But what about the quality of the communication? With texting the quality is near zero. To me, text messages look like some kind of code, and in many instances, it is just that. With email, the writing quality may be a little better than texting, but what about spelling and grammar?

An area of significant gain, however, is the current illustrated communication. It is easy to attach or send a digital snap, via phone, laptop, tablet, or other electronic gizmo. Not many letters back in our day contained photographs.

But what have we lost in the digital age? We are losing the hard copy. There will be fewer bundles of letters in our attics. Instead we will have text and images on assorted chips or out somewhere in the cyber world.

The younger generations would not want it any other way. To repeat, they love this stuff. But do they even realize (or care) that the retrieval of their own lifetime images by future generations will be at risk?

I don't think that I have to affirm the obvious here. Keep some hard copies. Download

the digitals, print them out, or take them to the drugstore for prints. Store them safely. If you receive a poignant email that is particularly appealing, print it. Print out some of your own letters for posterity as well.



[www.letterwritersalliance.com](http://www.letterwritersalliance.com)

This web site promotes the hard copy. It is the **Letter Writers Alliance**, dedicated to encourage well-written communication through letters. Membership is available for a very nominal fee. It is worth looking at, as this is a most creative site.

[www.writealetter.org](http://www.writealetter.org) is another site established by a USPS mail person. It contains a great blog on letter writing.

The digital age offers many opportunities if we bother to take advantage of them. Sure, there will be change, albeit, uncomfortable for some of us, but it is coming. The one risk, as I see it, is the lack of a paper trail if we are not careful to keep some hard copies of that special stuff of ours. Ed□



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