



The Overprint

Newsletter of the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club

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**Most Meetings Held the first Tuesday of Every Month at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Site: Berkshire Commons, 5485 Perkiomen Avenue (Route 422)
Turn North on Lincoln opposite of the Dairy Queen.
Proceed 300 feet, turn left on Washington and look right of center at the stop sign.**

Tuesday, February 4, at 7:00 p.m.

"Bring a Stamp Album Night"

Every member is encouraged to bring a stamp album and share it with the group. You can tell us why you selected that album, it's good and bad points, and how it adapted to what you collect, and a brief description of the stamps it houses. This should be very enlightening to see the variety of albums among us.

**Rescheduled from January due to the cold weather,
let's make this a great meeting!**

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Weather or Not?

The Reading Stamp Collectors' Club has a weather policy in case of unsafe outdoor conditions.

Basically, if either the Reading or Exeter Schools close for the day, or close early, the meeting is automatically cancelled.

If the weather is questionable, we may still cancel—check with an officer before going out in severe cold below 15 degrees, ice, snow, etc.

Dues for 2014 are due and payable if you have not at yet blessed our Treasurer, Mike Matus with your \$10 family payment.

You can pay Mike at the next meeting or mail a check to him at 157 Lucinda Lane, Wyomissing, PA 19610.

We sadly note the passing of club members Rudolph Bentz and Marilyn Shirley in the late Fall. Our condolences to the families.

The Good Old Days—It Wasn't Always So!

Remember back to the days of yester-year. Ok, way back beyond the days of yester-year. I'm talking ancient world yester-year days.

There was no post office (and if some folks get their way there will again be no post office and the following informational article may become your hard-copy mail survival guide).

For most of history, mail delivery was pretty much a matter of finding someone going in a direction toward your addressee and handing them a written note to deliver for you, often for a tip.

This was not as much of a problem as you would think as most people could not read or write so they were not writing letters anyway.

The Romans ran an Imperial Post for the purpose of distributing messages to and from the emperor but I have never read of any regular use of the post for reasons other than official use.

And yet, mail got through because letters, or at least their text, survive from ancient times.

One of my favorite letters was a communication from a slave owner to his slave. Apparently—and I don't recall the specific geographical sites involved—a businessman from Rome set out on a trip to what is now the Middle East.

He took with him an entourage and

they traveled by boat.

Along the way, a slave took ill. Being a good and honorable Roman, he left the slave at an inn with money to pay his keep.

He did not leave him at a hospital because there were none and medicine was mostly home-made treatments and quackery.

The businessman continued on his trip, but just before returning he wrote a letter to his slave.

He wrote that he hoped the man was doing better, that he missed him and that he would pick him up the way back.

I know it was a letter and not verbal because the businessman told the ailing man to show the letter to the innkeeper. The letter promised to pay any monies due for the slave's keep if only the innkeeper would continue allowing the guest to stay there.

We have no idea what happened after that, but it is clear that the businessman sent the letter near to the time he was returning. I can't believe the Imperial Post delivered such a personal note. It is my guess that the man found an earlier ship going that way and gave the captain or a passenger some money to deliver it.

Perhaps someday, we will have to tip someone to deliver any hard copy mail, that is, if we can't use the Imperial Post!