



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, October 2, at 7:00 p.m.

## British Air Service

by Mike Bach

**Mike can present a great program—we should charge admission, but we don't! So show up and enjoy a great evening of philatelic fun.**

### ***Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells***

O. K., it's not Christmas yet, but the annual seasonal party will be held Wednesday, December 5 at the same site as our regular monthly meetings.

**Note:** This year it is on a Wednesday. You must pay for admission, but the cost is highly discounted. Those who have attended in the past know the drill and they know this is a nice meal for a small price. BYOB rules apply.

Space is limited and it is seriously recommended that you pay Roy Baardsen ASAP. See him at the next meeting or call him at (610)-927-3435. Roy can quote the amount.

### **September Drawings**

Richard Jay Ross won the attendance drawing of \$10. The amount in October starts again at \$5. Roy Baardsen won the 50/50 drawing of \$19. Congratulations fellows, and thanks for supporting the club.

### **Advertising Sought for The Overprint**

We are trying a new policy. We are trading advertising for 10% of the sales made.

Remember, this is a small publication and a general ad offering items for sale is best, such as: "Duplicate collection 80% complete of Liberia. Call Joe at such-and-such."

*Sory, Mike, about the program description. I was too far down in newsletter & couldn't open your attachment as well. Thanks Stan*

# Where Is It Now—Caesar's Silver Armor

by Stan Raugh

I once wrote to an Italian philatelist and asked why Italy did not produce more stamps honoring the Roman Empire and Emperors.

Her response was that modern day Italians saw this as a period of disgrace and foreign aggression.

Personally, I think ancient Rome is the most fascinating of all historical stories--and of all Roman lore, the romance of the gladiators is one of the first associations people make when asked about Rome.

Gladiatorial contests are believed to have been invented by the Etruscans as part of their funeral rites. Many ancient cultures sacrificed slaves (and sometimes wives) at the funerals of an important deceased person.

Apparently, someone got the idea that if you gave a couple slaves weapons and had them duel to the death you would not only satisfy the sacrificial requirements but also entertain guests!

The Romans adopted these 'games' as they saw them and used them to gain political popularity. It began with important Romans who would hold gladiatorial contests and use the excuse of the death of some ancestor (often a father) even if it happened 20 years ago.

The games were first held in a marketplace with the audience standing, progressed to temporary wooden seating, then to larger and larger arenas with each politically ambitious Roman out doing the other.

I now introduce Julius Caesar. Born to a prominent family, he was a military genius who early in his career was elected as one of four Aediles. These were young men in charge of certain state religious

ceremonies.

Caesar wanted to announce his intent to become a prominent Roman, but had little money as his branch of the family was much more modest financially. He planned spectacular gladiatorial games in about 65 B. C. that would be the greatest ever, but didn't have the cash.

Onto the stage walks Marcus Crassus. His wealth was beyond that of any Roman and he backed Caesar. This is because he saw Caesar as a challenger to his powerful political enemy, Pompey.

In a slave revolt years before, Crassus crushed the rebellion. But Pompey--who fought a side bar battle--rushed back to Rome and claimed all the glory before the responsible Crassus could get there.

Caesar and Crassus planned the greatest of all games with thousands of gladiators. Pompey's people passed a law limiting all games to 320 pairs of gladiators.

So, Caesar and Crassus regrouped, agreed to the limit, but ordered 640 sets of armor made of solid silver. It was unbelievable to see, and the crowds of Romans went wild at the sight of the silvered gladiators.

After Caesar's games, the armor was rented out (in smaller numbers) and eventually melted down for bullion.

But somewhere, I believe, in a gladiators grave (some were wealthy) or buried under a state monument, one of the 640 sets of armor could still exist.

Julius Caesar was eventually made a dictator for life and then assassinated shortly afterwards. Following civil war, his nephew Octavian became the first Roman leader to be named emperor; he then changed his name to Caesar Augustus (of Bible fame) and ruled for many years.