



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, May 7, at 7:00 p.m.

"The Whizz Kids Quiz"

Join us for a team-quiz-challenge based on U.S. stamps and the history they present. Your team may win without knowing about stamps. It may lose if it doesn't! Be there to find out!

We're in the pink, or is it light pink?

...but wait...there's more!

There are some nice opportunities in the mill for club members that will make paying dues a pleasure.

The club is planning a trip to the Postal Museum in Washington in the fall. This time we should get in to see "the vault" which is material not usually available to the public.

The club voted to purchase a machine that determines color varieties. Feed it a stamp and it will evaluate it for color shades. So many times the color shade can result in a huge shift in value. How many times have you scratched your head and wondered if a stamp is medium violet blue or light violet blue?

And, our annual picnic may be changed to July to accommodate a special speaker, Ken Lawrence from the American Philatelic Society (APS). The Pottstown club is working on setting this up. The auction may be shortened, but Ken is supposedly a great speaker and will fill us in on the APS.

The club plans to make use of the machine available a half hour before meetings as well as devoting a regularly scheduled meeting to this topic.

Sorry, but we had such a good time during the attendance drawing and 50/50 your editor forgot to write down the winners...don't miss it in May!

NOTE:
There is a possibility that a representative of the color machine company may join us. If so, the quiz will be re-scheduled. See below ↘

No Wonder They Fake Stamps

It's no wonder they fake stamps. Some people even fake themselves!

But before we get into that, I can tell you that just about every collectible has fakes. Autographs and Indian relics top the list, with stamps somewhat behind.

What prompted this was an article I just read that was penned by a prominent authenticator of Native American artifacts.

At one time I gave up all hope that a person could buy these relics worry-free. New technologies, however, are beginning to pull ahead of the fakers and there is more hope than ever that an expensive artifact can be documented as what it is claimed to be.

Anyway, the article I read said there are thousands of "Hopewellian Pipes" in collections and the marketplace. The authenticator, a dean in his area, estimates that only about 200 or so are legitimate.

And why not...people have even faked themselves.

Starting in the late 1800's and until the 1950's this was common.

For example, one man in his later years claimed to be John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Lincoln. There were many whispers that JWB escaped and ended up everywhere from Texas to India.

This JWB chose Texas, although he got around the South and told at least two people he was the real JWB. One was an attorney who found out the man died, traveled a long distance to the funeral home, paid the final expenses as no one else claimed the body and took JWB home.

After a few years, the lawyer traveled with the mummified corpse in the Carnival circuit. The attorney wrote a book to prove he had the real JWB and made a claim for the reward money, which had already been paid out to others for the 'real' JWB.

At first the claim looked good, but judicious historical research found otherwise. Henry Ford, an aggressive Lincoln collector, even toyed with buying the corpse, but his people looked at the evidence and advised against it.

The lawyer withdrew the mummy after several years and the crowds waned, and sold it to another man who exhibited it until about WWII as I recall. Underground stories say it is laid away in the collection of a serious Lincoln collector.

Probably the best claimant was a man who told many he was the really Billy the Kid. For a time it was hotly debated and many serious old West historians accepted it until eventually the facts caved in. One problem was that a few years before he claimed to be Billy the Kid, he claimed to be another minor western celebrity. Why not be both! A recent book, interestingly enough, proposes that there were really two Billy the Kids (this title was common) in the same area at the same time and it accounts for many of the anomalies.

Survivors of the Custer fight were also numerous. The most entertaining claimed the General waved good speed to him as he rode to safety. Having read many books on the General I can tell you he would not have waved good luck to a deserter.

One historian said that because there were no survivors from Custer's force, it is hard to know if there were any survivors!