

MAY 2005

Editor: Bill Snyder

Some Philatelic Psycho-Babble from the Prez

A primary task of professionals in the marketing business is to *motivate* people to buy their products and services. Both marketing professionals and psychologists, who mentor them, like to present motivation as being a strange and mysterious aspect of human behavior.

In reality, *motivation* is simple, basic, and easy to understand. What motivates us to do specific things is the desire to act in a manner that will lead to us satisfying related needs and wants. Thus, at noontime we are likely to be highly motivated to enter a Big Burger Café and order their jumbo monster burger, fries, and a shake. Psychological motivational wisdom states that within about a half-hour of doing so our motivation to consume any food will be (temporarily) non-existent. When a need, any need, is there we are motivated. When the need is satisfied or not there, motivation disappears.

Let's apply the theory of motivation to philately by asking the question — What motivates you to be a philatelic collector? A general answer to this question relates to the way in which philately satisfies our need for a pleasurable activity. A second answer, for us as club members, is the way in which being a member of a stamp club satisfies our need for pleasurable social interaction.

Having identified the obvious, conscious motivational forces that propel us into being club-member philatelists, there are also some subtle, unconscious, but important personal needs that philately helps us to meet. They include;

- The human brain is like a muscle, it must be exercised or it will atrophy. This need is especially important as we age. Philatelic study and research provides a very pleasant form of gray-matter exercise.
- One of the keys to successful living is the ability to take in “the big picture” and then break it down into smaller details. This skill is sharply honed through our study of fine details on stamps and covers. It also is the key to discovering philatelic treasures whose fine detail was missed by others!

- Many, perhaps most, people experience stress as a result of being forced into a fast-paced, hectic, and often aggressive lifestyle. Philately, on the other hand, can provide stress-relief because it is slow-paced, passive, and non aggressive.
- Psychology has clearly established that the more power and control we can exert over our lives, the greater is our level of satisfaction with life. In philately we have near total control over what we collect and how we collect it. Where else can you get so much control!

Now it's time, as expressed by prison inmates, to "whip a cheap psych job on you." With you now being an expert on philatelic motivation, do you do enough to market philately to family members, friends, and co-workers? Do you watch for opportunities to share with others the way in which philately can help to keep them mentally sharp, reduce stress, and contribute to a feeling of well being? Oh yes, it is also fun to do!

Without question, we need to continue the quest to market philately to young people. However, it is believed that even greater benefits are likely to result in the lives of mature adults who enter or return to philately. Evidence to support this idea is to be found in the many people in our club (the writer included) who returned to philately in middle-age. What we need to do is to benefit more people and increase the philatelic ranks through skilled, marketing, motivational messages. Now that you are a motivational expert, go to it!

Al

New Test Period for Custom Photostamps

The Wall Street Journal reports that the USPS has authorized a new test period for photostamps. Photostamps incorporate pictures provided by consumers, and sell at a premium to regular stamps. The stamps are set to go on sale on 17 May.

Just over a year ago, USPA authorized a trial of photostamps issued by Stamps.com. The trial was quite successful—a total of 2.75 million photostamps were sold in just two months. But the trial ended abruptly: Pranksters successfully used photos of criminals, political leaders, and comic figures on stamps, to the considerable embarrassment of USPS.

The use of photostamps has been under discussion for much of the past year. The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee has opposed photostamps. It argued that the law prohibits defacing or otherwise placing personal marks on US currency. Whether stamps are currency under US law has been reviewed by the Department of Justice, which has apparently concluded that a test of photostamps is permissible.

Stamps.com has established stringent criteria on the kinds of photo materials that can be used during the test period. Additional vendors have been invited to submit proposals on photostamps.

The USPS, always on the lookout for new sources of revenue, is hopeful that the test is a success. A 20-stamp booklet of .37 photostamps is projected to sell for \$16.99. The \$9.59 premium over a regular 20-stamp first-class booklet would allow plenty of profit to be split between USPS and photostamp venders.

Stay tuned—a year from now the club may be debating which of our members will appear on a LCPS Stamp!

Minutes, LCPS Meeting, April 13, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. Two guests were introduced: John Powers and Bob Frey.

The Treasurer's report was read and accepted. Minutes were accepted as per the March newsletter.

It was noted that the date of the next "swap" meet is Thursday, April 28. The date published in the newsletter, April 21, was incorrect.

Al announced that our next regular meeting, on May 11, will be an auction. Each consigner should mark the items to be auctioned by writing "Consigner #", with space left blank to be entered when a number is assigned to that person at the meeting. Then fill in that number before the auction begins.

Jim Boyles reviewed LANCOPEX status. He also suggested that: (1) our club will pay \$15.00 for each nonmember attending the Stamp Camp; and (2) our club will pay the full price for club youth members to attend Stamp Camp.

Alistair Welch won the drawing - \$20.00

Respectfully submitted. Eleanor Wheeler, Secretary

Reid Arthur Slick

Reid Slick, a long-time member of the Lancaster County Philatelic Society, died April 28 in Lancaster General Hospital. He was 85. A memorial service will be held at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, May 5, at the Chapel at Garden Spot Village,

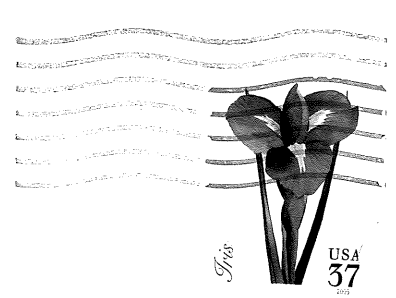
Stamp collecting was one of Reid's many hobbies and interests: He was an accomplished musician and entertainer; a sailor and marine engine mechanic; and a skilled woodworker. Indeed, for most members of the LCPS, Reid was the "bird man," and his attractive wooden birds grace the refrigerators in our homes.

Reid is survived by his wife, Mildred, two sons, and five grandchildren. He and Mildred had been married 62 years.

The Lancaster County Philatelic Society will miss Reid at its monthly meetings and extends its condolences to the Reid family.

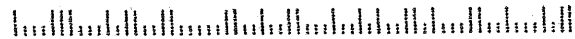


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May 2005 Meetings

The next regular meeting is at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, May 11, at the Maple Grove Community Center. The program is an auction. The minutes of the April meeting, above, describe the desired way of identifying consignments for the auction. The buy, sell, trade, and socialize meeting is on Thursday, May 26, at the Grace Baptist Church.