

NOVEMBER 2005

Editor: Bill Snyder

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An Op-Ed Article from Al (Part Deux)

Dear Editor:

In both personal conversations and letters to the editor in philatelic publications, a common topic of conversation is the United States Postal Service (U.S.P.S.) and its relationship with philately. I would like to add to the discussion by offering the following three points of view about the U.S.P.S.

1. A key point is that the U.S.P.S. is primarily in business to deliver mail — not ensure the future of philately. Although having had a few bad experiences with U.S.P.S. service and people, overwhelmingly I have praise for the mail delivery and counter service provided by the U.S.P.S. Especially noteworthy is the pleasant, service-oriented behavior of most U.S.P.S. employees with whom I have had contact. Special recognition is given to counter clerks who graciously place light corner cancels on covers when asked to do so. It is further believed that there are some U.S.P.S. employees who purposely deface philatelic mail; however, they are very, very few in number.
2. Second to being effective in delivering the mail, a major quest of the U.S.P.S. is to generate as much revenue as possible by selling stamps to collectors. As we know, the production cost of a stamp is a mere fraction of a penny. Its cost to collectors who purchase them covers the cost of delivery service—a service that is not provided by the U.S.P.S. Thus, revenue from stamp sales to collectors provides an almost 100% profit margin for the U.S.P.S.
3. Although it is true that the U.S.P.S. makes very substantial contributions to the staging of major stamp shows — at which it usually makes much money at its philatelic windows — it is my opinion that the U.S.P.S. is somewhat lacking in regard to having a deep interest in the present and future well being of philately. Some specific interest related criticisms are:
 - i. The foundation of dealer-customer transactions at stamp shows is the opportunity for customers to sit at dealers tables on what are, hopefully, comfortable chairs. In a somewhat arrogant manner, the U.S.P.S. refused to provide financial support to major stamp shows unless department store type showcases were substituted for traditional dealer tables. Both dealers and their customers complained, however, the U.S.P.S. stood firm in mandating such uncomfortable accommodations.

- ii. As most L.C.P.S. members know, we sent letters to two different U.S.P.S. executives with a request for a tour of the mail processing plant this past July. Had we received a response which denied our tour request, we would have accepted it. However, both U.S.P.S. executives totally ignored us by failing to respond in any way. Thus revealed was a total lack of interest in supporting philately, as represented by a county-wide club with an interest in the U.S.P.S.
- iii. In years past the U.S.P.S. did much more to network with stamp clubs. Joint projects were common, as was the active recruitment of club members at philatelic windows. Unfortunately, such activities are now very rare occurrences.

In conclusion, let's praise the U.S.P.S. for its mail delivery service, its many pleasant employees, and also recognize its need to decrease its junk-mail deficit through high-profit stamp sales to collectors. However, it is my opinion that the U.S.P.S. is greatly lacking in regard to providing sincere and meaningful support and leadership to philately and the future well-being of our hobby. AL

Minutes, LCPS Meeting, October 12, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$2,803.19 and the report was accepted.

The Secretary's report was accepted. Eleanor thanked Lucy Eyster for recording the minutes at the September meeting.

Nominations were held for Vice-President. Bob Noble was nominated by Peter Billis. Bob accepted and nominations were closed as no other names were submitted.

Several items were offered as give-aways, including promotional materials from the South African Philatelic Post Office and past copies of Linn's.

Our stamp trade and sale night will be the 4th Thursday of October.

The subject of next month's meeting on Wed., Nov. 9 is "Anything But Stamps". *We are all encouraged to bring samples of other things we collect.*

Plans for the Holiday Party in December include an exchange of a small philatelic gift – wrapped for the occasion. The value should be \$3.00 to \$4.00.

We agreed to send a donation of \$75. to the APS in memory of three members: Mark King, Don Weber and Reid Slick. Eleanor will forward a letter with the check to Bob Lamb at the APS.

Al introduced a book about Lancaster post cards, recently published by the Lancaster County Postcard Club. The book sells for \$30.00. He also mentioned a booklet, "Lebanon County Postmarks".

Jim Boyles will help work three tables at the International Stamp Show in Washington D.C. in May, 2006.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Eleanor Wheeler, Secretary

From the Editor

Semipostals—Semipostals, stamps that sell for more than their indicated value as postage, with the balance directed to a designated charitable purpose, have never been favored by the philatelic community. But the success of three current US stamps suggests that more semipostals are on the way.

The three US semipostals, all usable for the first-class domestic letter rate are: Breast Cancer Research (Scott B1), Heroes of 2001 (B2), and Stop Family Violence (B3). A recent US Government Accountability Office report has judged all three as successful, with over 22 million B1 stamps having been sold. The charitable contribution of the B1 is over \$44 million since being issued in 1998; the B2, issued after 9/11, is credited with over \$10 million, and the B3, issued in October 2003, about \$2 million. In the case of the B2 and B3 stamps, the money has not yet gone to a specific charitable cause. The success of the B1 stamp is attributed to its strong support by advocacy groups.

The Congress has authorized the Postal Service to select additional subjects for semipostals. USPS has indicated that it will not announce any selection, however, until the Congress concludes deliberations on a hurricane victim issue and other subjects.

Trafalgar Remembered—October 21st marked the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. Trafalgar, off the coast of northern Spain, is the location of the 1805 sea battle in which a British fleet defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets commanded by French Admiral Villeneuve. Lord Nelson, the British commander, who died during the battle, is one of England's greatest naval heroes. And Trafalgar is considered one of the most strategic sea battles of all time—and is as well a major historical event in British history.

To commemorate Trafalgar, the Royal Mail (the British USPS) has issued a set of six stamps depicting the battle. The stamps are based on a famous 32 foot watercolor of the battle painted by William Heath in 1825 and housed at Britain's National Maritime Museum. The six stamps are grouped in three se-tenant pairs.

These spectacular stamps, included in a prestige booklet, may be obtained by writing the Royal Mail's US Agent: Interpost, Box 420, Hewlett, NY 11557-0420.

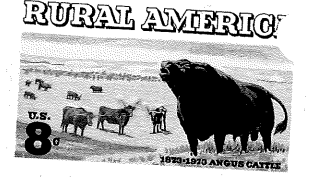
Stamp Shows—There are two shows in the local area during November: (1) Chambersburg Fall Stamp Expo, 5 November, at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel. Phone: 717-263-9797; and (2) Harrisburg FallCAPPEX 2005, 13 & 14 November, Linglestown American Legion, Linglestown (exit off I-81). Phone: 717-732-7813.

Program:
Anything but Stamps



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