



First State Philatelist



Vol.18#2

The Newsletter of the Brandywine Valley Stamp Club, Wilmington, DE

October 2014

Westtown Local featured

October 8

In October we welcome back Bill Schultz. He'll be speaking on the Westtown Local Post. Bill's a great speaker and there's usually a cash prize. As usual, we will be at the Brandywine Hundred Library and will start promptly at 6:30 pm (doors open 6:00 pm).

Highlights from September

Twenty people plus our speaker attended the meeting, among them new member Breena Fraga. The 50/50 was won by Gates Clarke, who donated it back to the club (\$11.50). Chris Baron reminded everyone about the new Facebook site Delaware Stamp Collectors - if you're on Facebook join us! Bob shared the results of a donation to the club that was sent to auction at Dutch Country Auctions and realized \$725! No dues increase this year. One of the ideas from the July meeting was to apply labels with club information to stamp publications and leave them in waiting rooms (doctor, dentist, mechanic, etc.) for the unsuspecting public to find. Bob had labels for everyone and lots of spare publications as well. To add a competitive element, the first person whose left magazine results in a new member gets a free year of dues. Mark your magazines!

Our speaker for the evening was Harry Charles. Harry has a variety of collecting interests but is perhaps best known for his expertise in Postage Due. His talk started with a definition of provisionals - stamps used for some purpose other than their intended purpose. In the years before the introduction of postage due stamps (1879) there were a number of solutions to the recovery of underpaid postage. All, however, lacked fiscal accountability. Even after the

introduction of postage due there were occasional stock shortages. One of the most common solutions was the use of regular postage to make up the shortage. A number of postmasters used provisionals - various issues overprinted with the amount of postage due. Many of these provisionals were only in use for a short period of time and only in a single city - very few copies remain in existence. Harry suspects that some of the existing examples were uses contrived by philatelists. In some cases bisects of regular postage or postage dues were used to get the correct amount. Postal regulations don't allow the use of bisects for regular postage but are silent on their use for postage due. Bisects were used through at least 1945.



Club Auction Lots due

The annual club auction will be bigger and better this year. We still need consignments- please get lots to Gates Clarke by the October meeting. A list of lots will be in the November newsletter. This year's auction will include lots from several recent, substantial donations to the club. This will provide a better selection of mid-range material, both US and foreign. So please plan to attend the auction and bid, as well as consigning your own material. Afterwards we'll see how things went and discuss further changes.

Where's Jean?



Brandywine Valley Stamp Club

APS Chapter #268

www.brandywinevalleystampclub.com

2014-15 Officers

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| President | Bob Rufe |
| Vice President | Walt Connelly |
| Treasurer | Gates Clarke |
| Secretary | Jean Woods |
| Board of Directors | John Graper Keith Marsh Tom Peskey |
| Newsletter Editor | Jean Woods |
| Program Chair | Bob Swed |
| DELPEX Show Chairman | Bill Clark |

The club usually meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Brandywine Hundred Library (1300 Foulk Rd., Wilmington) in the upstairs meeting rooms. In addition, meetings of the Stamp Swap Club are planned three to four times during the year; see program schedule for details.

Annual dues are \$15.00 and are due in January. Send a check made out to BVSC to: Gates Clarke, 2610 Belaire Dr., Wilmington, DE 19808.

Newsletter

The *First State Philatelist* is the official publication of the Brandywine Valley Stamp Club and is published 10-12 times annually. All opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and/or editor. Please address all correspondence to:

Jean Woods, Editor
412 Armstrong Ave.
Wilmington, DE 19805-1002
Home: (302) 633-4468
e-mail: jwoods65@verizon.net

BVSC 2014-2015 Program

October 7 – DELPEX meeting, 6 pm at the Stamp Center. New members always welcome. This will be the first meeting of the year.

October 8 – Bill Schultz will present on the Westtown Local. Meeting starts at 6:30 pm (doors open 6:00 pm).

November 12 – Annual club auction - look for the auction list in your November newsletter. Meeting starts at 6:30 pm (doors open 6:00 pm).

December 13 – Stamp Swap Club, 1-4 pm at the Brandywine Hundred Library meeting rooms. Most stamps just a nickel!

Area Stamp Shows

October 11 – Dover Stamp and Postcard Show, Dover Stamp Club, Camden-Wyoming Fire Hall, Camden, DE.

DELPEX Committee Ready To Go

It's a new year and the DELPEX Committee is back at work. If you'd like to help with planning next year's show please join us on October 7 at 6 pm at the Stamp Center.

BREAKING NEWS....

There's news that there is a FDC ceremony planned for the Dover Stamp Show on October 11 - this will be the ninth one held in the state (for a regular issue). It will be a reissue of the Purple Heart Stamp. See update on PAGE 4.



BTW...



Jean is here!

In Pursuit of Trivia

By Jean Woods

Readers may remember my visit last fall to the APS as reported in an earlier article. One of my finds in the library there was a copy of *The Guinness Book of Stamp Facts and Feats*, by James MacKay. I thought that this month I would take a dip into this fascinating book and share some of his trivia.

As stamp collectors we're all mostly concerned with paper letters with postage stamps or other marking affixed. However, postage systems have been around for thousands of years- before paper was even in existence. China is thought to have the oldest postage system (from 4000 B.C.) followed by Assyria and Egypt (from 3000 B.C.). Most of these early mails were for the use of state officials but in Assyria they were apparently open to merchants as well. There is also evidence that mail service existed among a number of states from this era. All of these postage services existed before paper had been invented. The earliest surviving "letters" are clay tablets using cuneiform script and even mailed in clay envelopes. Letters from Egypt carry red and blue markings with the message "*In the name of the living king, speed!*"

Think your mail is slow? Be glad you didn't live in Paris in 1870. Apparently some letters from the siege of Paris of 1870-71 (Franco-Prussian War) were lost in the River Seine. During the siege attempts were made to smuggle mail into the city by sealing them into steel spheres (*boules de moulins*) and then floating them downriver into the city. Unfortunately, German marksmen were able to sink many of them and others were



lost; apparently none of the 25 balls sent arrived. Some were recovered from 1882 to 1954. Despite the elapsed time, the post office made every effort to deliver the letters to the addressees or their heirs.

In another story from the Franco-Prussian War, the idea of microfilming messages to save weight was first used then. The messages were photomicrographed and then sent by pigeon from Tours to Paris. A single pigeon could carry up to 40,000 messages. The films were rolled thin and inserted into a goose feather quill. A silk thread was used to attach it to the base of the pigeon's tail. On arrival, the images were projected on a screen, from which they were copied down and sent to the addressee.

Postage officials are obsessed with the need for speed. Markings from letters in Venice (in Latin) translate as "*quickly, very quickly, very fleetingly*". The French used the phrase "*en diligence*" (with speed and care). French mail coaches took on the name "*diligences*" because of this phrase. The English used the phrase "*haste, haste, for life, post haste*"- we still use the phrase *post haste* today.

Publicity slogans on letters date back to 1661 London and promoted the mail service itself. It read The Post for all Kent Goes Every Night from the Round House in Love Lane & Comes Every Mor(ning). These slogans were only used for a few years and are quite rare.

Once datestamps with town names came into use, the problem of long town names appeared. The winner - surely the Welch village of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch (on Anglesey). This is cheating a bit, however, since the full name has only been used twice since 1973 on special occasions. The normal date stamp uses the abbreviation of Llanfairpwll or Llanfair P.G. The town name is translated as *St. Mary's Church in a hollow of white hazel, close to a rapid whirlpool and St. Tysilio's Church*. The longest place name in the United States is Kleinfeltersville, PA, although the longest datestamp is likely to be *Field Branch, Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy 10020 Sta., Cleveland, Ohio*. On the other extreme, there are over thirty two letter town names, although none in the USA. To top even this, there are two places in Norway with the town name of Å, but to avoid confusion their datestamps also list the district where they are located.



The postcode (aka zipcode) was first invented in Germany just before WWII. It originally used just two numbers for the postal area. This was changed to a four-number code in 1961. Other countries didn't start adopting post codes until the 1960s. A number of countries used four-figure codes while others, including the USA, used five-figure codes. The UK pioneered an alphanumeric code starting in Norwich in 1959, but not generally adopted until 1966. Canada followed the British system in 1971, while the Philippines used a different alphanumeric system. Most countries followed the introduction of postcodes with stamps to promote their use.

***FIRST DAY OF ISSUE CEREMONY
DOVER STAMP SHOW, OCTOBER 11, 2014***

After several previous unsuccessful attempts in recent years to secure a First Day of Issue stamp and ceremony for Delaware, we have just received preliminary First Day details for the reissue of the Purple Heart stamp at the Dover Stamp Show on October 11, 2014. The ceremony will be held at the show location: Camden-Wyoming Fire Hall, 200 E. Camden-Wyoming Avenue, Camden, Delaware 19934. Hours are 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The ceremony will commence at 11 a.m. with the presentation of colors by the Dover Air Force Base Color Guard, followed



by welcoming remarks from Melvin Nace, Show Chairman. Following remarks by one or more recipients of the Purple Heart, the stamp dedication will be made by the Dover Postmaster, An autograph session will follow closing remarks and photo opportunities.

The USPS will have a substation at the show, and will have the Purple Heart stamp as well as a supply of current and older commemorative and definitive stamps, including the popular Jenny Invert souvenir sheet (while supplies last).