



Mail Delivery
During the
1918 Pandemic

Philatelic Society of Lancaster County

The James Buchanan Chapter (#173) of the
American Philatelic Society
American Topical Assn., Chapter 118
Member, NY Federation of Stamp Clubs



**Please Note: This is
a Joint July-August
Issue**

Please note that our PSLC meetings will be virtual, starting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, 8 & 22 July and 26 August

The Veranda Chronicles

Our hobby has been my great pastime for the last few months when I get the rare chance to engage. I hope it is the same for you in this COVID-19 world. More importantly, I have enjoyed our Zoom meetings together. While real-life meetings are the best, our virtual engagements are the next best thing. Over the last several months, there have been more of you reaching out to me with interesting items, some to share, and others with questions. Please keep this up. I enjoy seeing what you have and the challenges that go with them.

The APS Summer Session is now over, but it was very successful, and I was honored to present a session myself, as did Bill Schultz, Paul Petersen, and Dick Colberg. We continue to go full-speed at WellSpan, but we are never sure what the next three to six months have in store, as we slowly ramp up our services. Most of our hospitals are at max capacity, and this is stressing our systems. COVID testing is still a priority with us while this remains somewhat limited across the country. Our 20,000 staffers are incredible and remain dedicated, as we look at what the future holds for us in

the upcoming "new world" of health care delivery.

Thanks to Suzanne and Paul, we continue to reload our Zoom meetings, now twice (2X) a month, and the highlights for July and August are no exception as you see below and on Pg.-4. Please share our invites to your stamp collecting friends across the country, and encourage them to join us for our meetings. They are welcome to participate in Show & Tell if they would like. This is what builds connectivity among the philatelic community across great distances and beyond. We welcome them all. See you soon, *CJDi*

Anniversaries of the Penny Black-Mike Bach

8 July 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Tonight will be a Pictorial Tour of the Anniversaries of the Penny Black. Last May 6th, 2020 was the 180th. But how did this all start? In 1984, I came to the United States, and in order to keep a philatelic connection with my dad, we decided on a Topical (Thematic) subject being "Stamps on Stamps". I would find them and send them to him, and he would put them in an album. We did this for 13 years until he died in 1997.

When I finally got the collection to the USA in 2007 after my

mother passed, I discovered that we had 6 three-inch binders full and still about 200 stamps to put on pages. When I looked at the collection in more detail, I noticed that a lot were the 150th Anniversary of the Penny Black. Thus, I started to pull together all my British Victorian Stamps, as I thought this would make a nice separate album. At this time I was just looking at Penny Black stamps on other stamps.

Over time I kept adding pages and tried to keep the same format my dad started. He had a 30-year-old typewriter, and I have a computer

and Microsoft Word. (See examples on next page.) I decided at the outset that I was not going to replace the work my dad did. It's a Sentimental Journey.

Well, I then found that there were 100th Anniversary Issues and also 125th and 140th. So now my interest was piqued to see if I could find ALL the Anniversary issues. I soon discovered that some of these Anniversary Issues did not even feature the Penny Black Stamp but maybe had Sir Rowland Hill or a Penny Black in a corner with other stamps as the "Stamp on Stamp". →Pg.-2

22 July PSLC Zoom Program

Plans for the 22 July meeting are underway. An interesting speaker is being approached, and our people are working with his people to see if we can possibly bring this about. But we do not want to tip

our hand. In the meantime, be preparing your "Show & Tell" items for this meeting. We should also have a near final disposition on the 12 August social distancing picnic that is in the works.

This event is well-detailed on Page-4 of this newsletter.

As the long philatelic season awaits us with two meetings a month, we will be seeking speakers and their presentations.

Volume 83, No. 7-8

July-August 2020

Visitors are Always
Welcome

PSLC meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except August) at the Crossings Meeting Room, Landis Homes, 1001 East Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543 at 7:00 pm. Dues are \$10.00 a year. For club information call Paul Petersen at 717-299-5640

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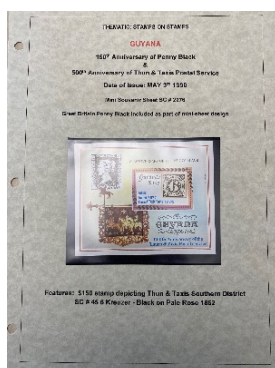
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Picnic Details
Page-4

→ Penny Black from Pg.-1

How do you know if you have all? You don't. I have searched through Scott Catalogues and purchased an ATA list and filtered by year. However some countries are just sneaky and issue the stamp the year before or in November not May. The search continues.

I then started collecting covers issued in the anniversary year and finally the collection morphed from Penny Black "Stamp on Stamps" and Anniversary Issues to anything associated with the Penny Black. This now includes invites to Gala Dinners and a "Penny Black Record", courtesy of Paul Petersen.



And now we've had the 175th Anniversary in 2015, and this year the 180th, and the collection has grown from the 40 pages of my dad to this! I guess that's what the stamp-collecting bug can do.



This 180th Anniversary was the theme of this year's 2020 Lancopex scheduled for April. Unfortunately it was a show, among all others, that was cancelled for safety reasons due to the pandemic. Paul and I had exhibits ready to go (well almost) but we'll have them again in 2021 Lancopex in honor of the 181st PB Anniversary. I wonder if any counties will be issuing some stamps or souvenir sheets for this anniversary.



13 May Minutes & Treasury

David Weichert, Sect'y, and Lou DiFelice, \$\$\$

Opening: President DiComo called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with introductory remarks welcoming all attendees. He reported his updating of the website with the addition of the new Lebanon Newsletter (Edited by **Scott Ney**) and club history by **Dick Colberg**. The meeting was held via videoconference, with approximately 44 members and guests in attendance.

Membership: Dr. DiComo went over the latest roster submitted by membership chair, **Barbara Buchanan**. There are 123 members, yet several are still in arrears with their 2020 dues. Tonight was guest **Tom Bowman** from the Wyoming Valley club and our newest member **Stan Shepp** of Colorado City, AZ. Stan collects classic U.S. primarily.

Officer Election: President DiComo presented **David Weichert** as nominee for PSLC Secretary. Dave's appointment was confirmed unanimously by vote of the members present.

Treasurer's Report: This report was prepared by treasurer, **Lou DiFelice**. As Lou was out of town, the report was given by **Paul Petersen**. (See end of minutes for data.) The ending balance is lower than usual because of refunding the dealer deposits for Lancopex and other show costs such as publicity, ads, printing, mailing, postage, etc., are part of the month's expenses.

New Business: Paul brought up the potential of our 12 August Picnic and will have a report in June. He also sought if there was interest in a second virtual meeting each month.

Presentations:

Jennifer Miller, Executive Director, American Topical Association. Jennifer provided an update on the ATA. She discussed the services provided by the ATA and

the current state of the organization's operations.

Scott English, Executive Director, American Philatelic Society. Scott provided the status of the operations of APS, including an update on the status of the Great American Stamp Show, scheduled for August 20-23 in Hartford, CT. He also announced that in response to the nomination they received for **Dr. Charles DiComo** for a Regional Service Award, the APS Awards Committee took the virtually unprecedented step of upgrading the nomination to a National Service Award, to be presented at the Great American Stamp Show on 22 August in Hartford.

Bill Schultz discussed the scarce 6¼-cent rate stampless covers, showing several examples while discussing the history and usage of these in the early 19th century and his efforts to catalog the few known examples.

Bill also made an excellent recommendation to help the hobby. Send an advanced check, now, to your favorite stamp dealer with the understanding that you will then spend this at the next available stamp show. This may help them get through some tough times.

There were two short presentations. **George Hauber** discussed his helping a friend with a parent's collection. In this were circuit books of the 1930s, which he showed some slides.

Paul Petersen showed two engraved souvenir cards from the 1966 U.S. Int'l show, SIPEX. This is part of a project on which he is working.

President DiComo wrapped up the meeting with closing remarks thanking this evening's presenters, all those that had arranged for the online meeting and all attendees, before closing the meeting at 8:00 PM.

Treasury: 1-30 April 2020

Opening:	\$4629.65
Income:	\$30.00
Expenses:	\$1751.00
Sum:	\$4629.65
2-CDs @	\$2908.65

Summer Birthday Greetings

To all those with July and August birthdays, may you find a day of happiness among these uncertain times. *Carpe Diem*

In the last newsletter I wrote of passing a house containing a wet happy birthday banner in the yard. A few weeks ago while riding my bike, I saw the mother and child

and mentioned my observation and sorrow, hoping that there was some semblance of a special day.

Starting as a bleak 7th birthday, his mother shared that this was his best birthday ever. It changed when the fire engine came and gave him a guided tour from stem to stern. He even got to sit up front and activate the siren. This is one he won't forget.

Club Notes

Programs, Hosts & Shows

2020 Programs

8 July: Anniversaries of the Penny Black, Mike Bach

22 July: TBA and Show 'n Tell

12 August: Summer Picnic.

6:00 pm, Millersville Memorial Park

24 August: New Listings in the 2020 Scott Catalogue - Fourth Bureau Stamps on Special Booklet Paper-Bob Rufe

The original program series below was scheduled in advance, but now everything is tentative.

9 September: Fall Auction.

Thomas Nichols, Host

14 October: 1) GB Stamped to Order Stationery and 2) Royal Household Official Mail. Dave Hunt. Lou DiFelice, Host

11 November: Annual Open House and One-Page Exhibits, Len Kasper & Paul Petersen.

9 December: December Dinner. Deb Ehleiter & Co.

2021 Programs

13 January: Club Auction

10 February: 1890: The Jubilee Celebrations of the Penny Post. Mike Bach

10 March: The U.S. 1933 Byrd Antarctic Stamp: Production, First Day and Other Uses. Alan Warren.

14 April: Exploring Postal History. Bill Schultz.

14 May: Canada's Role in Union & Confederate Postal Cross-Border Mail during the U.S. Civil War. Ron Majors.

9 June: Spring Auction

14 July: U.S. Int'l Philatelic Expos, Part-II. Paul Petersen

11 August: Summer Picnic. Millersville Memorial Park

8 September: Fall Auction

13 October: Open date

10 November: Annual Open House and One-Page Exhibits, Len Kasper & Paul Petersen.

8 December: December Dinner. Deb Ehleiter & Co.



Proceedings of the 24 June Meeting

The feature presentation tonight was by Mr. **Rudi Anders** of Minneapolis and President of the German Philatelic Society who gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled: *German Censorship in WWII with an emphasis on Berlin.* (↓)



This was followed by several short presentations by members and guests also known as Show & Tell. **Bob Kotanchik** (↓) presented several satirical British Stamp Images poking a little fun at the country's departure from the European Union earlier this year. He noted that on the Internet, there are about 40 to 50 other designs.



George Hauber showed an interesting legal cover from Marietta to Harrisburg. It was related to business on the inland canal.

Mark Jardel (↓) had an advertising cover dtd 15 February 1878 in NYC. This was a registered letter that was inspected. This is also a new registration mark of 1878. A link to this new '78 mark follows: <https://www.rfrajola.com/WS19/WS2.htm>



Bob Rufe shared a U.S. 344 with double watermark with a private perforation, one that is "Attleboro-like". Not sure what it was. **RD Noble** found and displayed one similar, though not quite the same perforations, and shared the catalog information.

Jim Strycharz has an 1860s postal map of the State of Maine that he will send to Dr. DiComo.

Len Kasper has some worldwide stamps to send to Dr. DiComo for some help in the identification.

10 June Minutes & Treasury

David Weichert, Sect'y, and Lou DiFelice, \$\$\$

Opening: President DiComo called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Following a welcome message, he mentioned about some potential new members who are submitting applications.

Membership: Barbara Buchanan announced that there are 110 paid members, and efforts to reach out to those still unpaid will continue through the end of June.

New Business: Paul Petersen led a preliminary discussion of our 12 August **Summer Picnic**. The Pavilion was reserved and paid for in January. He talked with the Millersville Boro Office, and they should be open in August for small groups who social distance. Right now the tentative plan is as follows: This will be a no-host picnic. Participants will bring their own food, drinks, small table covering, hand sanitizer, and masks. The facility is large enough to spread out sufficiently, given the large tables and facility footprint. There will be operating restrooms, and there is a sink inside the pavilion for hand washing as needed. When not eating but comingling with others, masks will need to be worn. Entertainment is TBA, but initial considerations are for lots of door prizes (the good, bad, and the ugly). Given this scenario, Paul asked for a show of hands to see if there is sufficient interest to pursue these modified arrangements. There were over fifteen, so he will follow-up and report in the coming meetings. Since **Doug Milliken** has arranged good weather in the past, there is a good probability of holding our picnic, however modified it might be.

fied it might be.

Second June Meeting: This will be 24 June. Mr. Rudi Anders, President of the Germany Philatelic Society will give a power point presentation on *German Censorship in WWII with an emphasis on Berlin.*

Tonight's feature presentation was by **Dr. Charles DiComo** who gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation: *A Primer on the U.S. Three Cent Stamp 1851-1860 Issue: Plating, Colors, and Cancels.*

There were several short Show 'n Tell presentations from participants. This included questions and answers and audience participation.

Doug Keefer displayed examples of tagging anomalies in the 1976 U.S. Olympic Issues, Scott #s 1695-1698.

Bob Kotanchik presented several examples of 1938 Belgian Congo Stamps overprinted "USA Detachment Airmail." Any ideas?

Paul Petersen had a corner card dtd 8 January 1932 from legendary stamp auctioneer and dealer, J. Murray Bartels of 116 Nassau Street to Paul's grandfather at his stamp business at 66 Beaver Street, a few blocks from Bartels.

RD Noble showed a one-cent precancel to France wondering if this was the advertising rate for circa 1913.

Treasury: 1-31 May 2020

Opening:	\$2,908.65
Income:	\$0.00
Expenses:	\$109.44
Sum:	\$2,799.41
2-CDs @	\$5,868.82

Always in the Hunt

While all were disappointed that '20 L'pex was cancelled, **1st VP John Hostsetter** found a silver lining. He recalled that the Int'l Forever stamp was issued around ShowTime in '18. He added some of these to our show covers as unofficial First Day of Issue.

John did his research again this year. Using leftover '20 advertising cards (left), he had several of this year's Int'l Forever stamps cancelled on 24 April, the FDI and the Friday of our show, had it taken place. He will make some of these souvenirs available to club members through the auction and door prizes.



Society Updates

All local meetings, exhibits, and shows of the Red Rose Coin Club, the Lancaster County Poscard Club, Philatelic Society of Lancaster County, the Philatelic Gathering, and APS have been cancelled until further notice due to the restrictions and home isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic.



This newsletter, our club website, and emails will keep you posted as events open up. For now, each society will convey to its members any further information related to their virtual meetings if/when they are held, so stay in touch. For Some Sunday Stamp Shows, Kevin Kellman is sending surveys sampling willingness of customers to attend a show. When this reaches a critical mass and he believes that the time is safe, he will reopen. This also hinges on the status of Lancaster County and the availability of the Farm & Home Center.

PSLC is starting an **online speaker exchange** with the clubs with which we exchange newsletters. Just recently this has been promoted on the APS Online Newsletter.

While we have several speakers with prepared PowerPoint presentations already in the wings, we are seeking others of you willing to share your PowerPoints online with other clubs (and with us, for that matter). We hope to build a network with clubs across the county. We already have several visitors to our twice-a-month Zoom meetings, so the medium is building steam.

With our often used words of *unprecedented* and *uncertainty*, planning any organizational activities is like aiming at a moving target. The best things people can do is to stay connected in any way they can whether snail mail, phone, computer, FaceTime, Zoom, and many more. Encourage one another as often as you can.

12 & 26 August 2020 Meetings

12 August 2020 at 6:00 pm (tentative) Club Picnic at Millersville Memorial Park

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and residual risks, this year's picnic will differ noticeably and will probably be a smaller crowd than we normally have. 2020 will be a no-host event. You will bring all your own food, drink, table covering, hand sanitizer, and masks. Think of it like a self-catered picnic.

The pavilion is large enough that we can spread out on the over-size picnic tables and keep our distances.

And if you would like further distancing than 6 feet, bring a lawn chair and sit outside of the pavilion. Other than while eating, masks will be required. There is a sink and running water at the pavilion with rest facilities on the side of the building. The Boro authorities assure me that these are regularly inspected and cleaned.

You'll miss Mike's, Bill's, and Paul's burgers 'n dogs. Yup, no Bubba Burgers this year! But, there is always '21 or '22.

Entertainment this year will include good fellowship, numerous door prizes (not all of them so good) and a silent auction (very good). The health of one of our members has suddenly taken a turn, and the club is

helping him to sell the collection. So bring some cash and change, and join in the event while helping out one of our club members. For any questions, please contact Paul. Nearer our picnic time, a sign-up will be sent to you as an estimate of the numbers expected. This is non-binding, but it will help in determining the extent of the door prizes and silent auction. It will be good to see one another, even at six feet or more.

Directions to the Park: Driving west into Millersville from Lancaster on 999, the Park is on the north side of 999 (Manor Ave.) just west of the intersection of George Street with 999. (See map below) A landmark is John Herr's Market. The park is just behind this supermarket. Also, across the street from the park is El Toro Barbacoa, formerly the Barn Door Restaurant. We'll be meeting in Pavilion-A, the big one just down the hill and on the left. Park right behind the pavilion in the large adjacent lot. Immediate Past President Doug Milliken has been very successful ordering perfect picnic weather over the years, and we are fortunate that he has agreed to an encore again this year. For those technically savvy, conduct a MapQuest or other map search for 9 Blue Rock Road, Millersville, and the park is right behind this location.



26 August 2020 at 6:30 on Zoom

New Listings in the 2020 Scott Catalogue - Fourth Bureau Stamps on Special Booklet Paper

By Bob Rufe

Tonight's presenter, Bob Rufe, is well known to many of us given his activity in APS and his home stamp club, Brandywine Valley where he serves as president. If his club didn't meet on the same second Wednesday as PSLC, we would be seeing more of him, so we are grateful for "fourth Wednesdays" and Bob's opportunity to visit.

These 1928 printings were on a different paper variety, long known to specialists, but never before mentioned in the Scott Catalogues. This program will provide some background of the original discovery, identification tips and tricks, market status, and recent developments since their listing appeared last October.



Bob is the son and grandson of postmasters in Bucks County, PA, and a collector of U.S. stamps since childhood. Studies in the complex U.S. Special Handling issues led to his winning the USSS Hopkinson Literature Award in 2007 and the same society's Hopkinson Trophy for the best twentieth century exhibit at its national show in 2010. The same exhibit, "U.S. Special Handling 1925-1959: The Stamps and the Service," garnered 23 Gold medals at WSP national shows, and won three Grand Awards - the 2013 PNSE, 2014 NOJEX and 2015 St. Louis Expo shows.

His research over the past ten years on the Special Booklet Paper printings of 1928 led to the development of a WSP Single Frame Grand Award-winning exhibit, "Special" Booklet Paper Printings of 1928, featuring the most extensive study of these issues ever presented. Bob's efforts culminated in the listing of these previously unreported paper varieties in the 2020 edition of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*.

Among numerous philatelic affiliations, Bob has been President of the Brandywine Valley Stamp Club, Wilmington, DE since 2007, an APS Tiffany Donor, and a member of the USSS "Ugly Shirts!"

Adjustment

The Pandemic came upon us very quickly. We were visiting family in early March of this year, and already we were seeing shortages of items like toilet paper and hand sanitizer. We arrived back from CT on the 14th of March, and I went to pick up my bike in the shop and follow with some grocery shopping. I made a few short stops for the next three days, never purchasing more than what filled the top of a small Eurocart at Giant.

Prominent at the entrance at my visits was the large table and display of St. Patrick's Day bakery items, an overstock of iced cupcakes in green, white, and orange.



These items remained in place through St. Pat's Day on the 17th, and it looked like they were never touched! During our last few days in CT we heard on the news of the cancellation of many events, especially the Saint Patrick's celebrations and parades in the large and small towns throughout the state.



Early immigration history shows that while the Germans headed south and west through Pennsylvania, the Irish and Italians headed north. While some in PA celebrate St. Patrick's Day, it is nothing like in New York or New England.

In light of a pandemic, this is but a small episode, but I thought of those not celebrating a typically fun occasion, and I further wondered if those who baked these unsold items would even have their jobs in the coming months. Ed.✉

Research Help Through the Bureau Engraving & Printing-Thomas Nichols

Ed's Note: A review of member Tom Nichol's book, DC-4 Skymaster Postal Material of 1946-1958 (2020) appeared in the May-June issue of this newsletter. (For you readers with enquiring minds, there is a link on the club website to a .pdf of this book. It is well worth reading if you have not already done so.)

In discussing this book with Tom, he shared how helpful the BEP was in supplying the production documents he needed to complete the work.

After learning of Tom's experience with the BEP, I encouraged him to describe what this organization did to assist him. It is a very interesting story of the resources available from one of our large government agencies.

Many of us think of these historical repositories appearing like the last scene in the Indiana Jones movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Here the ark is finally stored away among the mile high, mile wide, and mile long shelves of a giant government warehouse!

Tom's experience was certainly a positive one with the quality and speed of this office's assistance. Read this and see for yourself:

In doing my research around the DC-4 SkyMaster airmail postal material, I sought to find out as much detail as I could about the stamps that were issued. I was interested in the production side of the stamp from design to printing.

After many months, I was coming up short in the necessary details I wanted around the stamps. I canvassed many Websites, talked to dozens of individuals, and read

many articles looking for the information, but I had little success.

My next step was to contact the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing since they were responsible for the production of postage stamps in the 40's. I sent an email to their contact person identified on their Website, and I stated the information I was looking for on the six DC-4 SkyMaster stamps that were issued between 1946 and 1949.

I received an email back in a couple of days stating that my request for information was forwarded to their "Historical Resource Center" and that I should hear from them soon.

A few days later I received an email with 28 attached documents and a note saying that they hope this is what I was looking for. It was!

So, I started to review the documents, and to my amazement, the details I was looking for were contained in the copies of the production documents they sent.

For each of DC-4 SkyMaster stamps I received the following information:

- History of the stamp design
- Stamp die development history
- Production remarks
- Spreadsheet with plate numbers, production dates, and number of sheets produced.

My next quest for information was around the DC-4 SkyMaster stamped envelopes. With the recent success in acquiring the production information around the DC-4 SkyMaster stamps, I followed up with another email request asking for production information around the 5 cent, 6 cent, and 7 cent DC-4 SkyMaster stamped envelopes.

Sure enough, within a couple weeks, I received an email with attachments of copies of the design-related documents around the DC-4 SkyMaster stamped envelopes. The only thing that was missing was the actual numbers on how many envelopes were made. The actual printing of the envelopes was contracted out to the "International Envelope Corporation" in Dayton, Ohio between the years 1929 to 1964. As of 4/22/2020 I am still researching where to locate the actual number of envelopes that were printed.

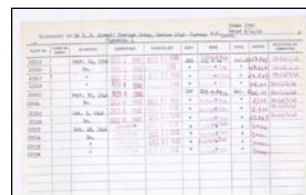
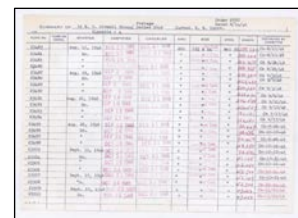
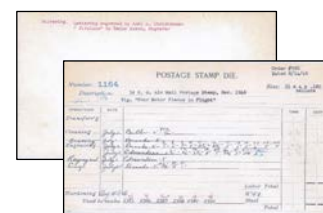
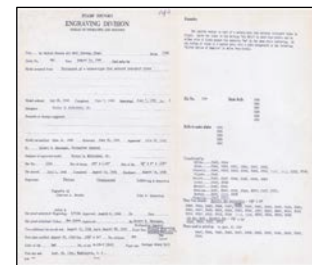
For each of DC-4 SkyMaster stamped envelopes, I received the following information:

- History of the envelope design
- Envelope die develop'nt history
- Design remarks

It goes without saying how helpful the information was that I received from the "Historical Resource Center" at the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

I hope that this encourages you to seek copies of the original documents as you participate in your philatelic research. To make this material available to the public and to cut down on expensive government storage space, these agencies are scanning a host of historical records, as time is available, often at little or no cost to the recipient. I may be the only one to request information around these SkyMaster stamps and envelopes, but it has helped my philatelic research immensely.

Below are some faded examples of the production documents of the 1946 large DC-4 SkyMaster stamp which I received. There were two work orders for the stamp, one in 1946 (Work Order #590) and a second in 1947.



PSLC Trekmeister(s) Wanted

Are you 85+ or under and seeking a job where the pay is in accolades from your philatelic peers? If so, then read on, my friends.



One of our club benefits for many years until not too long ago was a club trip every year to year-and-a-half. Our most recent Trekmeister and his list of usual suspects from the Reading club have retired. They

have left a great legacy to follow.

When the world opens up again there will be some wonderful one-day bus trip opportunities such as the ASDA stamp shows in NYC, NAEPS in DC, and the National Postal Museum (at left), also in DC, to name a few.

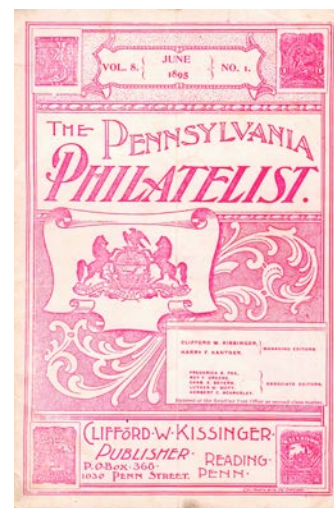
The job description includes research for an event and securing a bus. Working with club members, you will determine a destination and date. Negotiating with the bus company, you will collect the members' fees and maintain records. Some drinks and snacks on the bus are appreciated, but optional. The Trekmeister works best with a small team. Any interest? See Paul Petersen to apply.

The Pennsylvania Philatelist

Many collectors are attracted to old journals for a variety of reasons.

One of these reasons is to learn of the past and make a comparison with the present.

At the right is an 1895 issue of *The Pennsylvania Philatelist*, (Vol.-8, June No.1). This well type-faced 22-page publication appears to be the house organ of dealer Clifford W. Kissinger of Reading, PA whose name and ads are on almost every page. The ads are fascinating from JW Scott of NYC to Stanley Gibbons, of the Strand, London, WC. Some of the articles are timeless...and interesting.



Identifying Difficult Precancels, Cancels, and Markings-Bob Noble

I love precancels; you could say it is my collecting passion. You name it, and I collect it. My list is endless from Locals to Bureaus, on cover and off, playing card Bureaus to playing card Locals, Classics, DLEs, electros, city-type coils, printed-dated, even revenue precancels. And yes, it is revenue precancels where my story really begins. The bane of my precancel collecting (and maybe yours) is light precancel impressions on dark stamps. There are many other blurred items that use rubber handstamps and are often very difficult to read. There are many, many Local precancels that are very challenging.

Below are two well-struck legible Battleship Revenues with company names and dates. The top cancel is printed, and the bottom is rubber-stamped.



One day, while working on my proprietary Battleship Revenues (1898 Spanish-American War), I was checking my precancels

against *The Battleship Desk Reference* by Robert V. Mustacich and Anthony Giacomelli, published in 1999. This reference lists all cancels, excuse me, precancels known on the Battleship Revenue issue up to that date. These are precancels, since no one could cancel a Battleship revenue after it had been attached to a bottle of Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, or J.C. Boldoot, New York, N.Y., Perfumes. Many revenue stamps of all types were precanceled before affixing to save time and money. Plus, specialized in-line label application, with in-line free-form print technology for packaging, would not be available until the end of the 20th century!

While roaming around the Internet researching revenues, I landed on a site which I had forgotten, www.battleship-revenues.com. I typed "battleship revenues" on the address/search line to pull-up the web site. The very first item on the home landing page talked about computational philately (i.e.: programming computers to perform technical analyses of stamps) and the study of the color of stamps. The sixth item was **Cancel Extractor**.



Below left is a White Plains precancel with some legibility. However, below is the same stamp after using Cancel Extractor.



Recently, our local stamp club (122 members and growing monthly), had a presentation deciphering an 1850s cover from the U.S., to the Far East, one that had many hard-to-read cancels and transit markings. The presenter used **Retroreveal** to unveil the unreadable and complex markings on the cover. The presentation was in one word, awesome! See the program for yourself at the website lpcs-stamps.org/presentations and click-on, "From the U.S. to Farther India & Back Again."

Retroreveal is an amazing but very complicated program to use, even for a computer nerd. However, when you compare it to Cancel Extractor's drop-down function, on the Battleship Revenue landing page, it's a simple choice – Cancel Extractor! Cancel Extractor is simply "upload image here", "click" and "manipulate." After "clicking", and with a little practice, trial, and error, the "White Plains N.Y." precancel appeared vividly.

The examples to the right sold me on Cancel Extractor. The 2-cent

precanceled proprietary is shown before (top) and after (bottom) after Cancel Extractor. The stamp is cancelled "B&CO SEP 6 1898" and it is surrounded by a frame of asterisks which is more clearly seen in the bottom image.

Using the 2 cent denomination and the Battleship Desk Reference's tables, it is likely attributable to "Battle & Company Chemists, St. Louis MO." However, a "picture frame composed of asterisks "*" is unlisted in the catalog, and this is possibly a discovery copy for Battle & Company or for an unlisted company using the initials "B & CO."

