

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Our glorious U.S. Postal Service, displaying more of its infinite wisdom, has announced some changes to begin July 1. First-class letter rate stays at 32¢ and the card 20¢, but rates for second-class will change. They go up or down according to complex calculations which only benefit national publications whose large circulation allows them to take discounts for special sorting.

Major changes, however, are in the works for terms which have been understood and in use for over a century. "Express mail" for example is on the way out. Now it will be called "expedited mail." Why? They don't say.

Also on the skids are second-class, third-class and fourth-class. "Second" will become "periodicals class," third and fourth will combine to be called "standard class."

Chances are this mindless jerking around will cost smaller periodicals, possibly the one you are now reading, more money for mailings which may or may not be absorbed into present subscription levels. Some publishers have said they aren't worried about the July increase as much as the "additional ones likely to follow in

Doesn't the Post Office have better things to do?

years to come."

Small circulation publishers have fairly limited distribution which does not call for intensive sorting, so in effect, they are paying more so big ones can pay less. One publisher called it a "perverted subsidy," and he added, "The camel's nose has penetrated the tent; a camel is sure to follow."

The nation's leading stamp journal for collectors, LINN'S, has announced the results of a 1995 Stamp Popularity Poll. Readers, stamp club members, friends and youth cast a record 5,418 ballots and selected last year's Civil War stamp series as the best design in 1995.

The stamp featuring actress Marilyn Monroe got almost 1,000 votes as the "least necessary" while at the same time placed seventh in the "best design" category. Go figure.

And the flood continues...by the end of March, 17 new U.S. stamps had been issued for 1996. There are at least 51 more to come by the end of this year.

Are that many postage stamps necessary? Of course not.

The pressure to issue stamps honoring an individual never lets up, but one relative newcomer gets my enthusiastic vote: Mr. Buck Jones, cowboy movie star and my main man from the 30s.

(Of course I was also nuts about Hoot Gibson and Tom Maynard. Not so much Tom Mix, and I am not sure why.)

Buck "Unmasked Deperadoes of the Lawless Border" during Saturday matinees which cost a whole nickel. He also "Dared All for Honor and Love." He appeared in over 200 movies from 1913 to 1941, wearing that huge wide-brimmed white hat, and being courteous to females, friend to kids and kind to animals.

Buck and his wife Dell lived on a ranch in California where all the horses they had were white. He was a hero...in 1942, selling war bonds at the Cooanut Grove nightclub in Boston, a fire broke out which killed 492 people. Buck died two days later from injuries he suffered while trying to save people.

If the nation can issue a stamp honoring Buddy Holly they certainly can see fit to honor Buck Jones.

Write your Congressperson.

J.W.J.



John W. Johnson

The auto dealership waiting room looks up collectively. Expectantly, as its service manager, Bagadonuts, enters. Smiling.

"It will be a few more minutes," he nods to the gray-haired woman whose brakes "make a really weird sound."

"Almost like a faser," he whispers to me, back at the service desk.

"Faser?" He points with an index finger, calloused from years of writing repair orders. "You know...Star Trek."

I pondered the observation, remembering it was not the first time I had heard a Star Trek allusion in the last several days.

Gene Roddenberry, creative genius behind the television series, Star Trek, and its subsequent successful movies, died in 1991 at the age of 70. Terms, even concepts from the series, crop up all the time. As it did later that day among The Pit Crew when the focus had narrowed to an announcement that Honda Motor Corp. had designed an automobile engine which could get 100 miles to a gallon of gasoline.

"It's a conspiracy," Bagadonuts said.

Star Trek invades our lives

Conspiracy?

"Between the auto makers and the oil companies," he offered...otherwise why don't we put that engine in American cars?"

Rachet, a young mechanic, remained under the hood. Even then, a smile could be heard in his words. "Well then, the automakers are being beaten at their own conspiracy, because the resale value of American cars after four years is much lower than foreign cars."

No one picked up on that point. And having heard many of Bagadonuts' conspiracy theories before, the conversational thread was left dangling; instead, Bagadonuts turned the corner himself with an observation that smaller and smaller cars, and more and more people driving them, would likely mean some sort of mass transit control system using "Magnetic strips" or the like.

"Such strips (presumably electromagnetic) would line major and secondary roads, powering vehicles while controlling traffic and virtually eliminating the air pollution caused by today's vehicles," he said, adding:

"And when you want to get off the main roads, everything will be within the charge of your battery," he concluded.

Rachet bellowed with laughter. "You've been watching too much Star Trek," he grinned. "We can't even get 81 paved, much less what you're talking about."

The reference to Star Trek, of course, came without thought from Rachet, the ideas and aspirations of that futuristic world having become so much a part of our present day thinking.

To lure buyers into the market, automakers have for sometime now have offered prices (with rebates) so low that buyers initially couldn't refuse...something that Lee Iacocca knew would create the rebate monster, as Bagadonuts describes it.

As automakers have discovered, however, rebates and low interest rates, are only short-term solutions. What happens is that buyers simply wait it out, knowing that eventually a rebate or lower interest will be necessary. No longer can the major economic players like automakers depend on, or appeal to consumer greed, or keeping up with the so-called Joneses, to fuel the economic system. Consumers are now calling the economic tune through more intelligent buying decisions, and are less likely to be manipulated in a mass way.

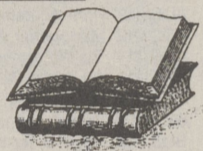
"And that kind of balance would have made Gene Roddenberry proud," Bagadonuts agreed.

He turns. Shouts through the window into the maintenance shop, "Hey Rachet?"

The multi-colored headband pops from under the hood.

"How you doin'?" "Almost done...and never finished," he grins.

LIBRARY NEWS



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The display case at the Back Mountain Memorial Library is showing a unique collection of china figurines to announce the 44th annual Prince of Peace Antique Show and Sale. With spring finally in the air, thoughts turn to annual spring and summer events.

The antique show will be held on Tuesday, May 7 from 11 to 8 p.m. and Wednesday, May 8 from 11 to 5 p.m. There will be 15 dealers from the area with booths selling their wares. There will also be a flea market and flower mart in the lower level. Lunch will be served by the Churchwomen, which includes many homemade items and special homemade pies.

Library showcases many lovely china figurines

The display case is featuring 19 china figurines which are German, bisque and Meissen. Included are some from occupied Japan, Czech, Austria and they are all from the early 1900's to 1940's.

The April meeting of the book club was held on the 15th in the community room. Membership is up to 194, with total dues received of \$1,725. A special memorial curio cabinet was recently received and the presenters explained the special purpose of it to the members. The club welcomed a new member at the monthly tea. Colleen Lynch, recently new to the area. Pouring at the tea table were Mary Panaway and Marge McGivern. The next meeting will be Monday, May 20 at 1:30 in the community room.

New books at the library: "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Connie Briscoe

is the story of Naomi Jefferson who was born into a comfortable world only occasionally marred by racism—even when she is called a nigger after wandering into the wrong neighborhood, she learns not to let it touch her too deeply. The rift between black and white America suddenly becomes personal. Fortunately, two people walk into her life, who make her believe again.

"And This Too Shall Pass" by E. Lynn Harris takes us into the locker rooms and newsrooms of Chicago, where four lives are about to intersect in romance and scandal. A rookie quarterback whose trajectory for superstardom is interrupted by a sexual assault charge by a sportscaster with her own sights on fame. He hires an attorney to defend him and Sean covers the story.

Flea mart spaces available at Meadows

The Auxiliary of the Meadows Nursing Center, is seeking vendors for the annual "Market on the Pond" flea market, scheduled for June 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The 8'x12' spaces are \$15 each. A reservation form is available by calling the volunteer department at 675-8600, ext. 138. Rain date is June 22.

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