

# Stamp



# Chatter

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July - September, 2020

## Sequoia Stamp Club

APS #687-54588

Club meetings are held every **second** and **fourth Tuesday** of each month at the Community Activities Bldg., 1400 Roosevelt Ave. Redwood City, at 7:05 pm.

Mailing Address:  
P. O. Box 235  
San Carlos, CA 94070  
Refreshments are served and visitors are always welcome.

More info at:  
[www.penpex.org/ssc](http://www.penpex.org/ssc)



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## President's Message

Congratulations to Jay, Patrick, John, et al. for a successful transformation to online meetings. We hope to have more attendance. All that is needed is a touch tone phone, no computer is needed. Instructions are being emailed to all members. It has been good seeing all your faces; I miss you all.



"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Due to COVID-19, we are all constrained in our actions. Social distancing is our new norm. I am enjoying being with my wife, Jean, more than ever before. I am an essential worker; so, I do go to work. At home, Jean spends time in her garden while I work with my stamps. Jean also takes care of our grandsons three days each week. She does their home schooling with them. She is a saint.

Again, thanks to Jay and others for the conversion to virtual meetings. Their hard work has made the change seem seamless. Also, thanks to Gerrit Verschuur, Patrick Ford, and Kristin Patterson for giving interesting presentations at the online meetings, and to Jim Giacomazzi for organizing our first online auction. Finally, a special congratulations to Jordan Schwartz, who we selected to receive this year's Collectors Scholarship. We wish her success at UC Berkeley in the fall.

Jim Southward

## Sequoia Stamp Club Schedule: Club Meetings (in black), Club Events (in blue)

- ♦ **July 1:** **CANCELLED.** First Wednesday mini-meeting, 10 AM, Community Activities Building (CAB)
- ♦ **July 14:** **ONLINE.** Using Stamp Auction Network (Jay Strauss).
- ♦ **July 28:** 6:00 PM SSC Board meeting (all welcome). Other Hobby Night. Silent Auction.
- ♦ **August 5:** First Wednesday mini-meeting, 10 AM, CAB.
- ♦ **August 11:** Hawaiian Stamps (Gary Morris). Silent Auction
- ♦ **August 25:** Australian States Revenues (Gerry Fields). Silent Auction.
- ♦ **September 2:** First Wednesday mini-meeting, 10 AM, CAB.
- ♦ **September 8:** Members Live Auction (Wally Jolliff).
- ♦ **September 22:** SSC 73rd Anniversary Celebration, Division of the Union (APS video). Silent Auction.

This schedule is subject to change depending upon the availability of the Community Activities Building. The complete schedule can be found online at [www.penpex.org/ssc/calendar](http://www.penpex.org/ssc/calendar).

# Picture Gallery



Our first online meeting using the Zoom video-conferencing application.



Ken Perkins sheltering in place. He's working on his stamp inventory while waiting for their first Instacart delivery. Photo courtesy of Shirley Perkins.



Several countries have issued stamps showing the importance of the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the world right now. This Swiss sheet was amongst the first to be issued.



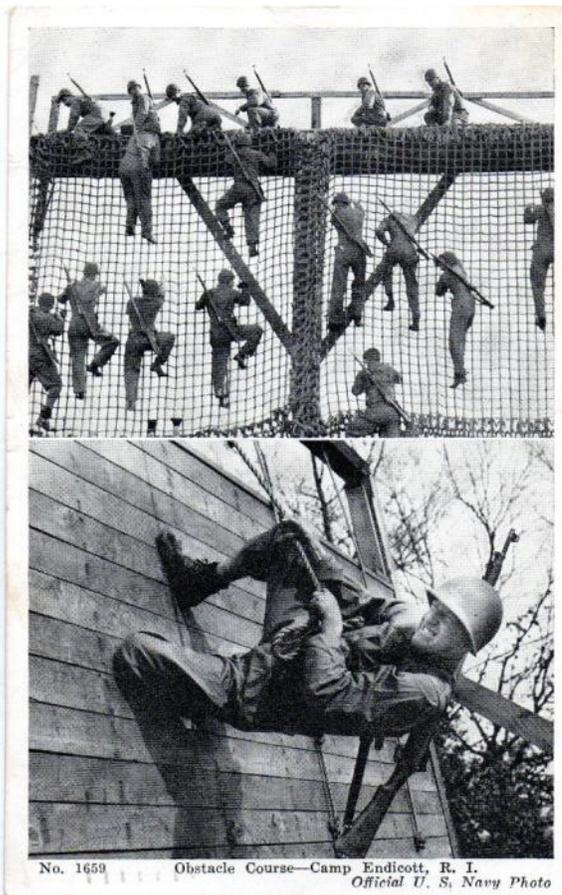
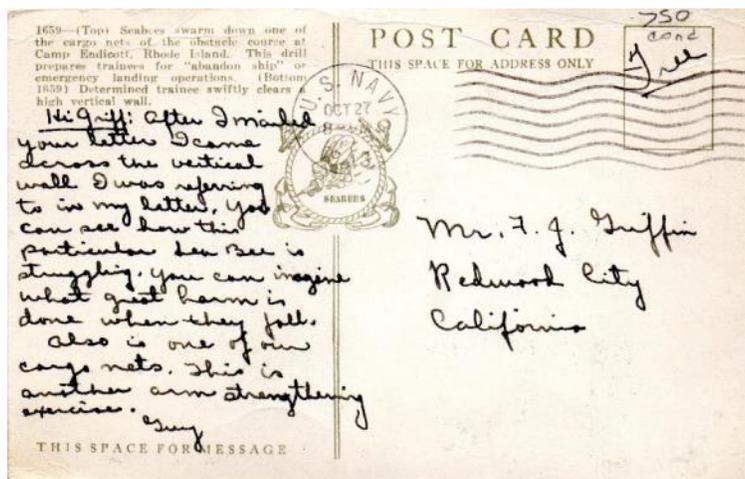
Gerrit Verschuur giving his online presentation "My Life on Stamps".

**Newsletter Staff:** Co-Editors: John Corwin and Jim Giacomazzi; President's Message: Jim Southward; Feature Article: Marsha Brandsdorfer; Photographer: Ken Perkins; Printing & Distribution: John Corwin.

The *Stamp Chatter* is published quarterly by the Sequoia Stamp Club. Visit our website at: [www.penpex.org/SSC](http://www.penpex.org/SSC) or email us at [sequoiastampclub@yahoo.com](mailto:sequoiastampclub@yahoo.com).

## Cover of the Month

By Jim Giacomazzi



I found this post card at the Hillsborough Antique Show a few years back and happily added it to my local postal history collection. The picture side shows two official U. S. Navy photographs of trainees at Camp Endicott in Rhode Island. The vast training camp built at Davisville, Rhode Island in 1942, provided more than 100,000 men of the U.S. Navy's Construction Battalions, better known as "Seabees," with construction training during World War II. The lower photo shows a trainee clearing a high vertical wall in the obstacle course. The top photo shows Seabees swarming down a cargo net to prepare them for "abandon ship" on emergency landing operations.

The post card has a U. S. Navy CDS and was mailed on Oct. 27, 1943. The Seabee emblem is shown on the card, and no stamp was necessary since service members during WWII were allowed to send personal correspondence free of charge. The card was mailed by a young man named "Guy" and sent to Mr. F. J. Griffin in Redwood City, CA.

I was unable to determine who Guy was, but Frank Griffin was a well-known Physical Education teacher at Sequoia High School. He set up an obstacle course on campus called the "atomic loop," a demanding physical exercise course that pushed male students to their limit. The young men swung hand over hand on ropes, scaled walls, dangled their way across suspended logs and ran through an obstacle course of tires. During the war Griffin received letters from former Sequoia students who thanked him for getting them in good shape. Army basic training was "a piece of cake" compared to what they went through at the Sequoia course. Griffin was named to the school Hall of Fame with a citation stating that he started a PE program that brought national acclaim to Sequoia and spawned hundreds of disciples in schools throughout the U.S. He was PE director at the high school from 1922 to 1960 when he retired and died shortly after. Griffin Field in Redwood City is named for him.



The "Atomic Loop" at Sequoia High School in Redwood City.  
(Photo: smdailyjournal.com)

# A History of the United States Postal Service

By Marsha Brandsdorfer

The early settlement of America opened post offices based on the same principles as the Royal Mail System wherein mail was charged by weight and distance and the recipient paid when he came to pick up his mail. High postage rates, however, were a struggle for Americans. Back in England, the Royal Mail System started to sell “Penny Black” stamps in 1840. By lowering its rates and encouraging people to prepay for their mail, the Royal Mail System concluded that even the poor could benefit from cheap postage and increase the Royal Mail’s income. The U.S. General Post Office decided to try this as well, so in 1847, a five-cent stamp bearing Benjamin Franklin’s portrait



and a ten-cent stamp bearing the portrait of George Washington were introduced and sold to the general public. By 1851, rates were lowered and more people started mailing letters at the new rate now able to keep in touch with friends and relatives. As population grew in America, railroads were built to enable to transport mail by train by the end of the decade. To save time, mail would be sorted on the trains during the trip. Later, postal clerks would work on streetcars and oceans liners to sort mail as well.

Regular home delivery of mail started in 1863. Rural town citizens, however, had to go to the post office to pick up their mail. There were trial experiments of rural free delivery (RFD), but it wasn’t until 1902, that President Theodore Roosevelt made RFD a permanent postal service. Air Mail Service commenced on May 15, 1918. Civilian pilots willing to fly in all sorts of weather were contracted to deliver the mail. Later, airmail contracts were given to private airlines to help get the mail delivered.

Stamp collecting became popular, but wasn’t really taken seriously until Franklin D. Roosevelt became President in 1933. As an avid stamp collector, Roosevelt worked with Postmaster Generals on some stamp designs. By 1960, the zip code was introduced to assist clerks in sorting the mail. Also, a new computerized machine with an optical reader could scan and separate letters based on zip code. It could not yet decipher handwriting, but could read typed labels and it too helped the General Post Office deal with the huge volume of mail. In 1970, after an 8-day postal strike, the newly named U.S. Postal Service (USPS) negotiated better pay and working conditions for postal employees and continued to work on modernization. During President Reagan’s administration, the optical character readers could now decipher most handwritten addresses and could put bar codes on letters, which helped them move faster through the processing centers. With the introduction of the Internet in the early 1990s, first class mail was hurting as correspondence by email and paying bills on-line became more prominent. The USPS was operating on a huge deficit. However, with eBay and Amazon, package mail escalated as on-line purchases grew. The USPS partnered with Amazon which may have saved the post office.



References in this article came from [Neither Snow Nor Rain: A History of the United States Postal Service](#) by Devin Leonard. *Editor’s note: Marsha has kindly donated this book to the club’s library.*



## Scholarship Winner: Jordan Schwartz

Each of the last 5 years, our club has provided a \$500 scholarship to a Sequoia High School senior who has a collecting hobby and is furthering their education at a 2-year or more school. That hobby does not have to be stamp collecting. This year's winner of the scholarship is Jordan Schwartz who collects pins, and we presented her with her award during our June 23rd online meeting.

Jordan says that she has been collecting pins for 8 or 9 years. She got started with the hobby at soccer tournaments where she bought pins for her favorite teams. She even found a pin showing a goalie, and she was the goalie for her soccer team. She now has over 300 pins in her collection. Our club members donated several pins that were given to Jordan to add to her collection. She enjoyed the pins showing postage stamps, because they include the two hobbies.



In high school, Jordan enjoyed mathematics and English. She participated in FIRST Robotics and varsity golf. She said that Sequoia High School had both an online and drive-thru graduation this year because of the current shelter-in-place orders. In the fall, she will be attending UC Berkeley majoring in computer science with a minor in science and math education.

Malcolm Catchatoorian, a club member, also has an extensive collection of pins that he briefly showed at the meeting. His collection includes many Olympics and Trader Joe's pins.

We wish Jordan continued success in college.



Plaque showing all scholarship winners to date. This plaque is located in the trophy case at Sequoia High School.



Items given to Jordan by the club. Thanks to Patrick Ford, Kristin Patterson, Shav LaVigne, John Corwin, Dave Moore, Laura Peterhans, and Jim Giacomazzi for contributing the various items.

## Postcard Corner: Smudged Old Card with a Great Story

By Shav La Vigne



You just never know what you may find while looking through old postcards!

Here is a not too exciting card that was published by I. Robbins & Son of Pittsburgh, PA. My first thought was “Nuts, the card is damaged and there is nothing I can do to fix it” (small surface tear on message side of the card); then I took a second look!

This card was posted on February 12, 1930 and shows the East End Savings & Trust and Highland Buildings, by Night, East Liberty, Pittsburgh, PA. It is franked with a rather nice upper left 5-cent Theodore Roosevelt Stamp.

In the hey day of the “penny postcard”, why did this card use a 5-cent stamp?

The card is addressed to Mrs. A.P. Englert (?), C/O Steamboat “City of New York”, Sturrock (Cape Town) Ltd., Union of South Africa. As a result the necessary extra 4 cents were needed to have it sent such a long distance.

Next, I had to find out about the SS *City of New York*. She was an American ship built in 1930 by Sun Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co. of Chester, PA. She was completed in February of 1930. The 8,272 ton ship was owned by American-South African Line Inc. of New York, NY. Her home port was New York City which indicated that this trip to Cape Town was more than likely her maiden voyage.

While finding this information, I learned that the SS *City of New York* was sunk by the German Submarine *U160* on March 29, 1942, while operating on her normal schedule with cargo and passengers.

*City of New York* was under the command of Captain George T. Sullivan. She was carrying 6612 tons of chrome ore, wood, wool, hides, and asbestos along with 132 passengers and crewmembers. 26 people died because of this attack while 106 were eventually rescued.

What about the “smudge” on the message side of the card? Not a smudge, a print! Reading the card, it says “This mark stands for Zumie (?) saying hello.”

The smudge is a paw print ... namely the “Left Paw” print.

Such a great history lesson from such a small insignificant piece of paper! Finding stories on cards like this does not happen often, but they can be found if one only looks, reads, and is curious. Postcards are an open book to so many things!

## The Other Side of the Wall

By Ken Perkins

Walls are usually made to keep something out. The 1500 mile Great Wall of China was built to keep the barbarians out of civilized China. Likewise Hadrian's Wall, a 75 mile barrier meant to keep the unruly Scots out of Roman England. Even today, America's growing wall on our southern border seeks to protect us from foreigners.

We in the West see the Berlin Wall as something else, though. Unlike other historic walls, we consider the 27 mile Berlin Wall to have been what then-Berlin Mayor Willie Brandt called "*die Shandmauer*", the 'wall of shame', built to wall East Berliners in. But this stamp from the German Democratic Republic (East Germany, officially the DDR - Deutsche Demokratische Republik), Scott# 2560, which was pictured in a *Linn's* article last year, gives us a look at the official East German view of The Wall.



Picturing a pretty young lady handing out flowers to a group of VoPos (VolksPolizei - the East German 'People's Police') with Friedrich Wilhelm II's iconic 18th century Brandenburg Gate in the background, it celebrates "25 Jahre Antifaschistischer Schutzwall" - '25 years (of the) Antifascist Protective Wall'. This official view of the Wall, often echoed by the captive East German press as 'the anti-Fascist rampart', was reinforced by a sign posted just

inside the East German border at a checkpoint reading "This is the beginning of the Zone of Peace. From here it reaches over 10,000 kilometers to the Pacific Ocean". Accompanying these words was a reproduction of Pablo Picasso's white dove and representations of Berlin, Potsdam, Warsaw, Moscow, and Beijing.

But the East German people obviously didn't see it that way. Despite a 1956 law making Republikflucht (fleeing the Republic) a crime, between 1945 and the building of the Wall in August of 1961, about 1 out of every 4 East Germans escaped to the West, many of those through Berlin. One of them was East German border guard Hans Conrad Schumann, whose 1961 leap over the barbed wire at a Berlin checkpoint was captured by 19-year-old photographer Peter Leibing, who had been watching him, when other West Berliners began encouraging the nervous-looking guard to '*komm drüber*' - 'come over!'



The German weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel*, in a November 1965 article entitled "From the cemetery to freedom", noted that the Wall in Berlin, "Germany's ugliest building...four years old on Friday of this week, demands the same thing as on the first day, August 13, 1961 - blood and tears ... turning good citizens into heroes and adventurers". But the world changes, and in April 2020, *Science* magazine's Berlin correspondent, molecular biologist Kai Kupferschmidt, posted this ordinary-looking photo on Twitter, telling us "This is the street in front of my house. The path of green snaking along it marks where the Berlin Wall used to stand. On the left was East Berlin, West Berlin on the right. Gives me hope in these Covid-19 times, a reminder that the world we live in is not literally set in stone."



## Stamp Collecting Reverse Poem

By Kristin Patterson

Read this poem from top to bottom explaining how many people feel about the stamp collecting hobby. Then read the same poem from the bottom line to top, to see how I feel about the hobby.

Stamp collecting will die!  
It is impossible that  
The hobby will survive.  
It is evident that  
Only old people collect stamps.  
I tell you, it is foolish to assume  
You can learn about the world from stamps.  
Obviously,  
Kids have no interest in collecting.  
It is untrue that  
You can meet lifelong friends.  
Still,  
Stamp collecting remains a solitary hobby.  
Shockingly,  
Philatelists live longer  
Is a lie.  
You have to be rich to collect stamps  
Clearly,  
Money  
Is more important than  
Knowledge  
The fact is that  
The hobby is boring.  
It is foolish to assume that  
Stamps will be an investment.  
In the future,  
The material will depreciate.  
I refuse to believe that  
Stamp collectors are outstanding people.  
Noticeably,  
Only geeks collect stamps.  
It is ridiculous to claim that  
You can possess a piece of history.  
Specialists say  
People have no time to collect stamps  
No longer can it be said that  
Stamp collecting is a lifetime hobby.