

Stamp



Chatter

Volume 53 - Issue No. 2 w328

April - June, 2022

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 7:00 PM. Refreshments are served and visitors are always welcome.

Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 235
San Carlos, CA 94070

More info at:
www.penpex.org/ssc



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President's Message

Hello Sequoia Philatelists,

The Sequoia Stamp Club made club history on March 22, 2022, by holding its first hybrid meeting. We were finally able to meet in person at the CAB building along with including members through ZOOM. Overall, the meeting went well. There was short period of time where the ZOOM members experienced some sound interruption. The issue was discovered and corrected. As we have the pleasure of having more hybrid meetings, we will improve our process. I believe there are several aspects the hybrid meetings hold that we didn't have in the past. The HDMI system gives a higher quality of viewability for our CAB group than the older video projection screen gave. There is also a desk camera that will work very well for live auctions. It will be exciting to see how the new tools we've been forced to use by the COVID will help us grow and improve our programs.

Many of our members in the Sequoia Stamp Club are volunteers at the WESTPEX Stamp Show. WESTPEX is coming up on April 22nd to 24th. The show is at the Marriot Waterfront Hotel near the San Francisco Airport. For the investment of \$5, you can attend all three days. This show includes over 60 dealers, 250+ frames of exhibits, auctions, society club meetings, collectors and friends you know, and new friends you haven't met yet. For more information, please check www.westpex.com.

It is the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Sequoia Stamp Club, and the anniversary will be officially celebrated in the fall. Kristin Patterson is heading the celebration committee. So far it seems we will have a weekend event. What is certain is the anniversary is going to be a highlight event with many exciting activities including neighboring stamp clubs and organizations.

Stay well,

Patrick Ford
President, Sequoia Stamp Club

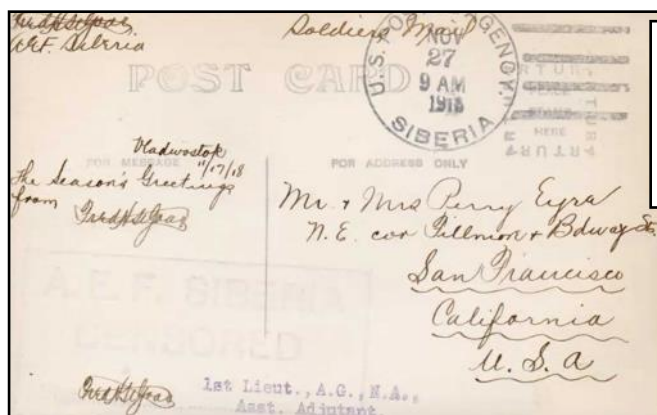


Calendar: Club Meetings (in black), Stamp Show (in red), & Other Event (in green)

- ♦ **Apr 12:** Swap Meet and Box-on-Loan.
- ♦ **Apr 22-24:** **WESTPEX, SF Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Burlingame, CA**
- ♦ **Apr 26:** Members Live Auction.
- ♦ **May 10:** 6 PM SSC Board Meeting (all welcome). 7 PM "How to Catalogue Your Special Collection" by Peter Adams. Silent Auction.
- ♦ **May 21:** **Western Philatelic Library Open House, Redwood City, CA**
- ♦ **May 24:** "Blast From the Past" Members Photos. Silent Auction.
- ♦ **Jun 14:** Bird Stamps by David McIntyre. Silent Auction.
- ♦ **Jun 28:** Scholarship Winners Present. Silent Auction.

The complete schedule can be found online at www.penpex.org/ssc/calendar.

Picture Gallery



Jim Giacomazzi talked about the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia during World War I. This postcard was sent from Siberia to San Francisco in 1918.

Screenshots courtesy of Ken Perkins.

Patrick Shandonay talked about his world travels and showed stamps from the countries he visited including these from Chad where he was working with a United Nations agency.



Our March 8th meeting was the last meeting done entirely online using Zoom.



Working with the UNHCR in Chad
(United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)



Return to the Community Activities Building on March 22nd!



Jay Strauss (in the corner) and Patrick Ford (seated center) setting things up for our first hybrid meeting using Zoom for the remote attendees.

Meeting in progress. It was pretty much like the "old days" (i.e. pre-pandemic), except that we had 9 members attending with Zoom.



Post meeting socializing around the silent auction. Laura Peterhans (left) studying circuit books, Cathy Phalen chatting with Peter Adams (left center), Mike O'Brien looking at a catalogue (right), and many others talking about stamps.

Photos by John Corwin

Newsletter Staff: Co-Editors: John Corwin and Jim Giacomazzi; President's Message: Patrick Ford; 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 or email us at sequoiastampclub@yahoo.com.

Railway Mail Service

By Marsha Brandsdorfer

Since railroad routes were expanding, Postmaster George Buchanan Armstrong felt sending mail through the railways would provide much faster delivery than continued delivery by horseback. Due to Congress' agreement, Armstrong, therefore, became the founder of the Railway Mail Service in the United States. The first Railroad Post Office (RPO) originated in 1862, and mail would be sorted on these trains during transit. RPOs had pouch racks to hold bags of mail ready for sorting and their walls had an arrangement of slots for the sorting. Clerks responsible for the task were Federal employees. Outgoing stamped letters were postmarked on local letters received along their routes by clerks who were equipped with postmarking cancellation stamps.



Scott #Q3

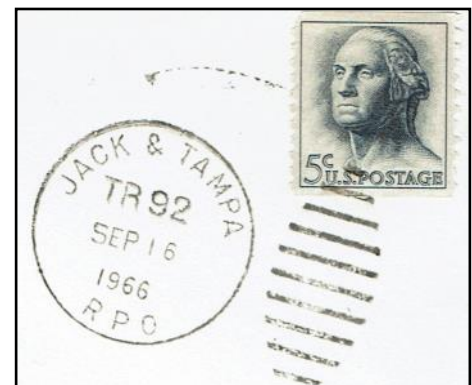


Scott #Q5

For those stations where the train did not need to stop to pick up passengers, mail that needed to be dropped off were in pouches that the clerk would throw or kick mail off the train that was designated for that station. Trains did not slow down, so at speeds of 60 mph or more, this was a dangerous job as the clerk did not want to get caught on other objects, such as poles along the route. Visibility was difficult, especially at night or when it was foggy out, or in rain or snow. The clerk also used a hook to grab and retrieve a pouch of incoming mail from the stations. Railroad cars were poorly constructed with wooden cars which were dangerous and flimsy, sometimes causing injury to workers. It wasn't until March 4, 1911, that the federal government passed the "steel car law," wherein all wooden cars were to be removed and changed to steel, and constructed under rigid safety specifications.

There were train schedules or routing changes, sometimes due to flooding or a wreck, which often required the reworking of the mail to be sorted. When there were train robberies, especially in the earlier years, clerks would carry guns, usually a Colt .38, and they fought back, sometimes shooting the robber to save the mail. Clerks fought for better and safer working conditions, better salaries and for labor unionism. Benefits were minimal in the early days of railway mail service. There was no overtime, sick or pay for leave time. There was no retirement pay. But unionization was still frowned upon by the government. It wasn't until July 1, 1971, when the American Postal Workers Union was eventually founded.

The Railway Mail Service changed its name to the Postal Transportation Service in 1949, because with improved highways, railroads became less attractive and rail routes lessened. Most mail was no longer sorted on trains. Routes continued dropping and the Post Office began transporting mail by airplanes and trucks. The last RPO route made its final run in 1977.



Jacksonville to Tampa RPO cancellation



Scott #2265 on First Day Cover

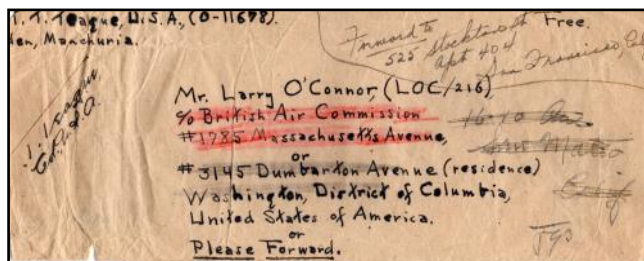
I read the ebook, [Mail by Rail: The Story of the Postal Transportation Line](#) by Bryant Alden Long and William Jefferson Dennis, and [Express, Mail and Merchandise Service](#) by Jeff Wilson as research for this article.

Cover of the Month

By Jim Giacomazzi

While rummaging through some assorted covers, I came across the tattered item shown on the right. What caught my eye was what looked like Mukden, Manchuria, in the partially shown return address. It turns out that the sender of this letter, Col. Theodore T. Teague, serial number 0-11678, a signal officer in the US Forces in the Philippines, was a WWII hero. The photo below shows him being awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, with Oak Leaf Cluster, and a Purple Heart.¹

Colonel Teague (known as "Tiger" to his comrades) was serving on Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright's staff as Chief Signal Officer when the Philippines were invaded by the Japanese. As troops were withdrawing to the Bataan Peninsula, Col. Teague headed up a signal corps team with the mission to destroy broadcasting equipment so that it would not fall into enemy hands. In the closing days of December, Col. Teague ordered the receiving equipment of the Manila station dismantled and the transmitting equipment and antennae blown up, and then he and his men crossed to the island of Corregidor to carry on the fight. After sending a final message from the Malinta Tunnel, he was taken prisoner when Corregidor fell on May 6, 1942.



During his internment, he was confined in eight different prison camps. The citation on his Oak Leaf Cluster states, "On the forced march to Bilibid Prison, Colonel Teague shouldered the pack of a fellow prisoner and supported him on the protracted march under the scorching sun."¹ Since officers were separated from enlisted men, he along with Wainwright and the other officers were transferred by ship first to Formosa and then to Manchuria. He was at a prison camp in Mukden when he was liberated by Russian troops on Aug 20, 1945, and evacuated from Mukden on Sept. 10.²

The circular date back stamp on the cover shows that the letter arrived in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 22. It has a U.S. Army censor label, along with a Japanese marking, so it may have been sent while he was still interned. The letter was mailed to Mr. Larry O'Connor, who is shown as next of kin on a list of Americans taken prisoner by the Japanese.³ It was forwarded to San Mateo where it arrived at the post office on Oct. 1, and was forwarded again to an address in San Francisco. I do not know if it arrived there, and could find no additional information on Larry O'Connor or Col. Teague's life after he was liberated.

For further reading about the experiences of prisoners of war of the Japanese in the Philippines, Formosa, Japan and Manchuria during World War II see the book by William C. Braly: *The Hard Way Home: From Corregidor to Manchuria, Three Years a Prisoner of the Japanese in World War II*.⁴

¹ <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/12442943/col-theodore-thomas-teague-bataan-pow/>

² <https://www.west-point.org/family/japanese-pow/Tarlar/Tarlar.htm>

³ http://www.mansell.com/pow_resources/campists/china_hk/mukden/hoten_main.htm

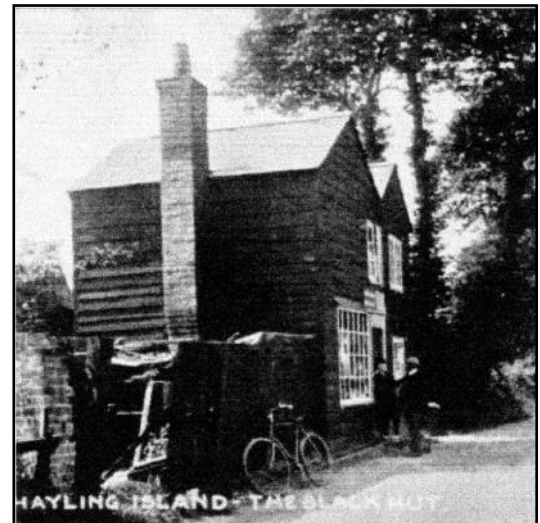
⁴ <https://www.amazon.com/hard-way-home-William-Brady/dp/B0007E4AXC>

An Edwardian Postcard with Rebus Address 1903

By Dave Moore

Merriam-Webster definition of rebus: a representation of words or syllables by pictures of objects or by symbols whose names resemble the intended words or syllables in sound. English speakers started using the word *rebus* for picture writing in the early 1600s.

This is a small card approximately 4.5" by 3" and it was posted at Gable Head in Hayling Island on October 17, 1903. It is stamped with an SG 215 (Scott 127) ½d blue green stamp tied with 3 Gable Head CDS cancellations. Gable Head was a sub-office of Havant and was closed in April 1955. This type of rebus address was popular in later Victorian and Edwardian times.



In the letter on the back of the card, the sender references investigating a previous card that was not received, and requests that this card be retained for him.

Here is my interpretation of the pictures and symbols on the front of the card:



This is the address, almost certainly Black Hut as can be seen from the photo above right. The Black Hut (later Seddon's Fish Shop), Mengham Road, Hayling Island, photographed about 1908.



This is the recipient's name, and my current guess is (Mr.) Colt Lock. If anyone has other suggestions, please let me know.



H(ants) is the usual abbreviation for Hampshire used in an address.



Hay(stack) Ling(cod) hence Hayling.



(Eye)Is Land hence Island.

Thus, the address: Mr. Colt Lock, Black Hut, Hayling Island, Hants

There is one additional puzzle on the card: The name F White is written in the bush to the right side of the hut. Perhaps the artist, as it is not the name of either the sender or recipient.

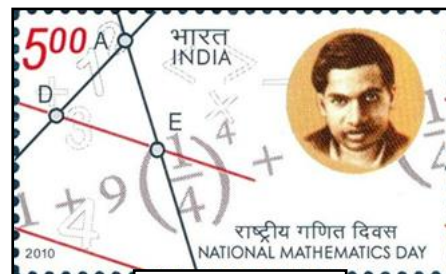


The Man Who Knew Infinity

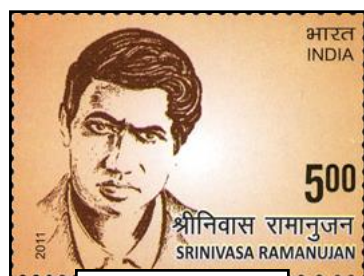
By Ken Perkins

Every country likes to put its famous people on its postage stamps. India is no exception. Birthplace of The Buddha, India can boast of great poets (Rabindranath Tagor), scientists (Subhramanyan Chandrashekhar), and political leaders (Mahatma Gandhi). All of these well-known people, and more, have appeared on many of India's stamps.

But who's this fellow on the stamp with the mathematical symbols on it? Less recognized outside of India than those mentioned above, the man on these stamps is the brilliant mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.



Scott #2610



Scott #2560

Born in 1887 to a poor Brahmin family in a small town near Madras in South India, the young Ramanujan quickly showed his mathematical talent. By the time he was eleven, students two years ahead of him were asking him to solve problems for them. At thirteen, he had already mastered a widely-used, college-level trigonometry textbook. When he was 17, his mathematical abilities were rewarded with a school prize, at which time the school's headmaster introduced him as a student whose mathematical gifts were off scale. He was so dedicated to mathematics, however, that he neglected all other subjects, resulting in his repeatedly failing Indian college entrance exams, never receiving a BA degree while in India.

Pure mathematics, particularly number theory, was where his brilliance really showed. Pure mathematics, according to a course summary at MIT, is "*. . . the study of the basic concepts and structures that underlie mathematics. Its purpose is to search for a deeper understanding and an expanded knowledge of mathematics itself.*" Within number theory itself, Ramanujan frequently worked with infinite series. While I don't pretend to understand what he accomplished, here are two examples of what an infinite series looks like:

The first series is: $x = 1 + 1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 + \dots$

The second series is: $x = 1 + 1/2 + 1/3 + 1/4 + 1/5 + \dots$

The ' \dots ' at the end means that you can keep adding terms to infinity. In one of these similar-looking series' the sum of the series 'converges' on 2 - the more terms you add up, the closer to 2 you get. But in the other, the sum just keeps increasing - the more terms you add, the larger the sum becomes. I'll let you figure out which is which.

While he was eventually recognized in India as doing ground-breaking work, he and his supporters soon recognized that in order to be able to contribute to the field at the highest levels, Ramanujan would need to leave India. The story is a long one, but eventually, in 1914, after already having written letters explaining his work to two noted Cambridge mathematicians, he finally attracted the attention of G. H. Hardy, a well-known Cambridge pure mathematician. Hardy was astounded at the examples of his work that Ramanujan sent him; Ramanujan had proposed theorems Hardy had never seen. Hardy was eventually able to get Ramanujan to come to Cambridge in 1914, where he and fellow mathematician J. E. Littlewood worked with him for many years.

Ramanujan worked with his British colleagues until 1918, when, in ill health, he returned to India, where he died in 1920. Some say, only half in jest, that the combination of the English weather, English food, and English standoffishness caused his death.

Continued on page 7 . . .

Ramanujan ~ continued from page 6

To this day, many mathematicians marvel at how a self-trained Indian, far removed from the currents of contemporary mathematical thinking, managed to produce so many original, ground-breaking theorems and concepts. His work is still employed in fields as far removed from the high realm of pure mathematics as signal processing and black holes.

Although G. H. Hardy probably failed to recognize and help Ramanujan with some of his personal problems, the two were still very close. The aging Hardy, giving a lecture in 1936 to an audience filled with the intellectual elite of the era at Harvard University's 300th anniversary celebration, spoke of *"a man whose career seems full of paradoxes and contradictions."*¹ And then Hardy with *"the memory still fresh of the day a quarter century before when an envelope stuffed with formulas arrived in the mail from India, began to tell about his friend, Ramanujan."*¹



Scott #369 on
First Day Cover

¹ *The Man Who Knew Infinity: A Life of the Genius Ramanujan* by Robert Kanigel

Cataloging Your Special Collection

By Peter Adams

At WESTPEX, I will present a talk on Sunday, April 24, at 1:30 titled "Cataloging Your Special Collection." This talk is for the advanced collector. It is not a review of off-the-shelf philatelic software. It is a talk designed to provide advice on how to use Microsoft Excel to create your own cataloging system. I will also be giving a cut-down version of this talk at the May 10th club meeting.

So what is a special collection? It is a library science term for any group of items assembled for a specific purpose. Special collections are frequently difficult to catalog using the Scott catalogs or any other similar catalog. A special collection might be a collection of family letters, a collection of philatelic material flown on the zeppelins, or a research collection of one stamp intended to document plate varieties, color varieties, etc.

For this talk, I will rely upon the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules used to catalog books in libraries, Scott Specialized Catalogue, my years as a library cataloger, and my research into plate varieties of U.S. Scott #295. The goal here is to help advanced collectors document their collection for their own use, for insurance purposes, and to help anyone who might inherit the collection. As such, basic library terms will be discussed, and basic cataloging methodologies will be explained.

At WESTPEX, please help promote Sequoia Stamp Club by signing up for one-hour slots at the Council of Northern California Philatelic Societies booth at the top of the escalators on the right. A great opportunity to greet, meet, and chat with people while telling them about the club. Club and show fliers will be on the table. There is nothing to sell, just share your knowledge. Click on this link to sign up: www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4eaca92fa4fd0-cncps. Direct questions to Kristin Patterson.

The Edison Stamp, the Edison Light, and the Edison Influence on Postcards

By Shav La Vigne

Thomas Alva Edison was born in Milan, Ohio on February 11, 1847, one hundred and seventy five years ago this year. Through his long life, he became one of the most well known and successful inventors of all time.

Although he received only limited formal education, his mother, Nancy, saw the eagerness in her son to learn and provided him with everything that he needed in the way of books and material for him to teach himself.

Edison said “My mother was the making of me. She understood me; she let me follow my bent.”



Scott #654

Starting with the telegraph, on which he became an expert technician, he constantly thought of ways to improve the system. His efforts led to the invention of the automatic telegraph, the duplex telegraph, and the message printer. With these successes behind him, he decided to dedicate his life to be a full time inventor.

Edison and his family moved to Newark, New Jersey where he set up a small laboratory to continue his work on the telegraph eventually giving birth to the universal stock ticker in 1875.

With the help of his father, Samuel, Edison built a new larger and better equipped laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey which opened in 1876. It was here that, among other ideas, Edison and his associates began to work on at least three thousand different theories to develop an efficient incandescent light.

Although arc lights were available at the time, they were far too bright to be used within the confines of a house. Edison's team worked to develop a thin strip of material, called a filament, that could be heated by the flow of electric current through it and get hot enough to glow producing light. This filament had to be strong enough to last through many on and off cycles in order to make the light bulb practical.

By 1879, the lab produced Edison's first high resistance electric light. This was done by passing electrical current through a thin platinum filament that was encapsulated in a vacuum. The vacuum within the glass bulb slowed the filament from melting. Although proving that the idea worked, this first light bulb burned for only a few hours before burning out.

Edison went on to test several thousands of other materials used for the filament. One of the test materials was tungsten, which is used in light bulbs today. Unfortunately, he was unable to work with this difficult-to-handle material efficiently, given the tools available at the time.

As time went by, Edison and his staff began testing various plant fibers that were carbonized and used as light filaments. Plants like boxwood, hickory, cedar, flax and bamboo were tried, unsuccessfully, just to mention a few.

Eventually he decided to try a cotton thread that was carbonized and encapsulated in a vacuum bulb. When electricity was passed through the thread, it began to radiate a soft orange glow. The bulb burned out in about fifteen hours of use, but it was the beginning of further experimentations that continued to burn longer and longer each time. On January 27, 1880, Thomas Edison was granted patent number 223,898 for a practical electric light bulb.

Before his death on October 18, 1931, Edison patented 1,093 of his inventions, the everyday light bulb being the most utilized by millions of people all over the world.

In 1929, the United States issued the stamp shown above to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the electric light bulb. The stamp was issued in three formats: flat plate press, perf 11 (Scott #654); rotary press, perf 11x10½ (Scott #655); and rotary press coil, perf 10 vertically (Scott #656).

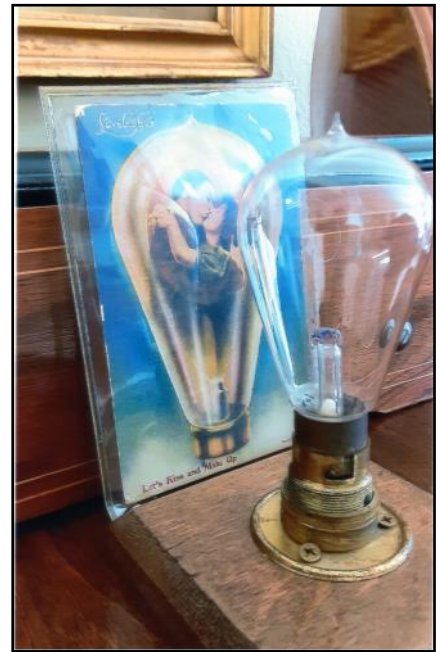
Continued on Page 9 . . .

Edison ~ continued from Page 8



The “Loveliights” Postcard shown at the left is one of 9 cards that were published around 1905. Each of these cards show a couple in an embrace surrounded by a heart shaped filament within an early Edison light bulb. Each published card has an individual sentiment, this card says “Let’s Kiss and Make Up” on the lower left along with “Patent Pending” on the lower right. The stylized “Loveliights” logo is at the upper left of each card.

I am lucky enough to have one of the original Edison style electric light bulbs. I decided to mount my light bulb with my postcard making what I think is a great display of both items as shown in the picture at the right.



The Junk Mail Virus

By Gerrit Verschuur

I was infected by a junk mail virus back in the 3rd quarter of 2020 when I contributed to a political action committee. Since then, my address has been passed along, over-and-over again, through the dark web of entities seeking money. For obsessive reasons, I have kept a record of the junk mail I received, and this has led me to be very concerned about the future of the US Postal Service.

Since I contracted the junk-mail virus, no less than 160 organizations have mailed me 800 pieces, producing a stack 9 feet high and weighing 50 lbs. I also received 26 wall calendars, 9 pocket calendars and no less than 29 sets of address labels. (I kept 3 sets.)

I love the post office and anything to do with stamps, but these statistics concern me. More than 95% of my mail goes straight into the recycle bin or into the landfill. I can’t even save any stamps. Junk mailers don’t use them. What does this mean for the future of the philately? No doubt others in high places are also concerned. Add to that the use of postage labels printed on demand, as happens in many European countries and at the USPS, and it won’t be long before philately will be totally focused on collecting antiquities, which of course it already is. Perhaps the value of covers passed through the mail will begin to attain high prices.

There isn’t much hope for an effective “vaccine” to eradicate this junk mail virus because the post office relies on these mailings to break even. The one sure way to stop the flow is to move out of town and hope the junk mail is not forwarded. But I only recently discovered how to “vaccinate” myself against this flow thanks to Federal Trade Commission web site that recommends another site, which, for a mere \$2, assured me that I would be free of the virus within 60 to 90 days. Time will tell.



Non-philatelic postage

New Members

Austen Heydon joined the club in January, 2022. He said that he inherited his father's collection, and after attending PENPEX, he decided to join the club to learn more about stamp collecting. His father had an extensive U.S. collection mounted on pages that he created himself.

Ann Marie Stratton joined the club in March, 2022. She is a topical collector who likes stamps related to Winnie the Pooh, animals, space, and dinosaurs.

Welcome, Austen and Ann Marie!

Members' Advertisements

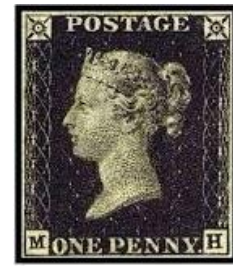
FOR SALE: Single country collections of Western Europe, Australia and colonies, and New Zealand. All mounted in Scott albums. Collections end with 1988-1989 issues. Most items after 1966 are never hinged. For details, call or email David Abrahams: 925-447-9386, dmabr1@comcast.net.

FOR SALE: Several Country Collections in nice handmade/printed albums: Australia/New Zealand, Austria, Canada, Germany, Germany DDR, Great Britain, South Moluccas, Trucial States. Also, Collections in Scott US National and Harris Worldwide available. US Covers and Worldwide Covers also available. Dan Aguiar, aguiar.dj@gmail.com, 650-245-9158

Stamp Sale at the Covid Stamp Store



US, Canadian, British, French, and German stamps for sale at reasonable prices. Collections at less than 20% Scott. Mint postage 29c+ at 30% off face value. Large selection of 19th century US covers. Special bargain price on Liechtenstein items. Three mystery boxes. Call Jim Giacomazzi at 650-365-2956 or send email to jgiacoma2@comcast.net for info or to make an appointment to view items.



WANTED: U.S. MNH Sheets from 2007-2016. Dan Aguiar, aguiar.dj@gmail.com, 650-245-9158

Worldwide Mint and Used Stamps in Red Boxes.
Countries A to Z with new material added daily.

Pick out at 25% of Scott Cat Value. For information contact Steve Morger: 650-593-9616 or severinmorger@comcast.net



Wanted: Printed cancels on U.S. Playing Cards Revenue stamps (RFs). Single stamp or entire collections. Kristin Patterson at kristin_email@yahoo.com or 408-267-6643.



Sequoia Stamp Club members may submit advertisements for no charge. Full details are available at <https://www.penpex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Rules-for-Classified-Ads.pdf>